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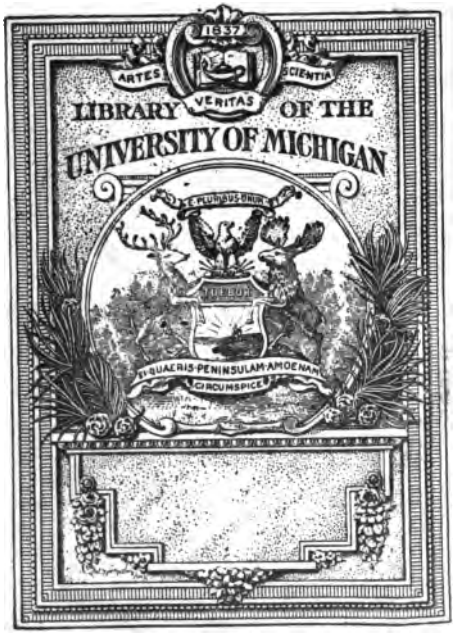
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CAPTAIN THOS WEBB

of the British Army

one of the first & the first Proprietors in America.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY T. MASON & G. LANE,

FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, AT THE CONFERENCE OFFICE,
200 MULBERRY-STREET

J. Collord, Printer.

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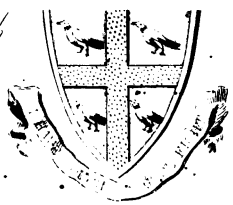

A HISTORY

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH:

BY NATHAN BANGS, D. D.

VOLUME II.

FROM THE YEAR 1793 TO THE YEAR 1816.

THIRD EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED.

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob; and thy tabernacles, O Israel," Numbers xxiv, 5.

"Behold, I send an Angel before thee—beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not.—If thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to thine enemies, and an adversary to thine adversaries," Exod. xxiii, 20-22.

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BOOK IV.

FROM 1792 TO THE FIRST DELEGATED GENERAL CONFERENCE IN 1812.

CHAPTER I.

From the close of the General Conference of 1792 to the close of the Annual Conferences of 1796.

We have hitherto traced the progress of Methodism in this country, from its small beginning in 1766 to the close of the first General Conference in 1792. Though it had difficulties, both internal and external, to contend with, it won its way through every opposition, maintaining the purity of its character, and exerting its hallowing influence on society, in the meantime molding itself into a more compact form and firmer consistency, until, we have seen, it was organized in one supreme judicatory to which its destinies, under God, were committed. I shall now proceed to narrate, as accurately as possible, its subsequent progress, both in its general councils and in its various ramifications over this extended continent.

1793. Though the labors of the conference, detailed in the former chapter, were great, and the subjects of deliberation elicited very considerable controversy, yet the preachers generally departed to their respective spheres of labor with promptness and

193617

cheerfulness; and the people, with the exception of those who were poisoned with the O'Kellyan schism, manifested great satisfaction at what had been done. It was, indeed, manifest to all impartial men that the members of this conference "sought not their own" glory, temporal aggrandizement, ease, or pleasure, but the glory of God and the good of mankind.

This year there were no less than nineteen conferences held in different parts of the country, for the convenience of the preachers and people, and it was upward of eleven months from the time of the first to the last,—the times and places of which, not affording much matter of general interest, I think not necessary now or hereafter to specify. In these several conferences the following twelve circuits were added:—*Swanino*, in Virginia; *Haw River*, in North Carolina; *Hinkstone*, in the West; *Washington*, Maryland; *Freehold*, New-Jersey; *Herkimer* and *Seneca Lake*, New-York; *Tolland* and *New-London*, Connecticut; *Province of Maine*, Maine; *Prince George*, in Maryland; *Savannah*, in Georgia.

An effort was made this year for the erection of district schools, in imitation of the Kingswood School, established by Mr. Wesley, in England; and an address was drawn up by Bishop Asbury to the members of the Church, with a view to call their attention to the importance of this subject. Several such were accordingly commenced soon after; but whether for want of skill in their management, or patronage from the people, or more probably from both of these causes, they lingered for a short time, and then ceased to exist. These failures in an attempt to impart the benefits of a Christian education made an impression

upon the mind of the good bishop and others that the Methodists were not called to attend to these things; and hence for several years they were suffered to sleep. This subject has, however, more latterly awakened a very general interest in the Church, and the cause of education has been prosecuted with vigor and success, as will be noticed in the proper place.

After the adjournment of the conference, Bishop Asbury commenced his tour of the continent by traveling through the southern states, and thence west over the Alleghany Mountains into Tennessee and Kentucky, contending with almost all sorts of difficulties, and yet everywhere scattering the seeds of eternal life. From the west he returned and visited the northern and eastern states, and on arriving at the city of New-York, he says, after mentioning that he had been much afflicted in body, particularly with an inflammatory rheumatism in his feet,—

"I have found, by secret search, that I have not preached sanctification as I should have done. If I am restored, this shall be my theme more pointedly than ever, God being my helper. I have been sick upward of four months, during which time I have attended to my business, and rode, I suppose, not less than three thousand miles."

In this journey he had the satisfaction to behold, in many places, a revival of the work of God, which, amid the gloom occasioned by his debility, the roughness of the roads, and the coarseness of his fare, particularly in the new countries, made him "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." While a foundation was laying for an extensive work of God in the western states, New-England began more fully to "stretch

out her hands to God." This year there were two districts in New-England, one of which was under the charge of the *Rev. Ezekiel Cooper*, and the other the *Rev. George Roberts*, both of whom were able ministers of the New Testament; and the *Rev. Jesse Lee*, who had opened a way for the spread of Methodism in this country, was stationed in the province of Maine, and Lynn. Through their labors, and those preachers who were associated together under their direction, several new circuits were formed in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, and many societies were established.

But this work did not go on without opposition. Though the civil regulations of the country did not allow the standing order to interpose their authority to prevent the Methodists from preaching, yet they were not allowed the full exercise of their ministry, particularly as respects uniting people in matrimony. Hence Mr. Roberts was prosecuted and fined for performing the marriage ceremony. As, however, this sort of persecution was becoming unpopular among the people, the more they were oppressed in this way, "the more they prospered," until finally all those legal barriers were removed out of the way, and the Methodists, as well as others, are protected in all their rights and privileges.

Though it will be anticipating the chronological order of the history a little, yet I think it will give the reader a more intelligible idea of the progress of the work in this country, to connect a few particulars in this place. This year the New-London circuit was formed. Though as early as 1789 preaching commenced in this city, yet no regular class was

formed until the year 1793, and that consisted of fifty members. And it was not until 1798 that they succeeded in building a house of worship in New-London, which was dedicated to God on the 22d of July of that year.

Warren circuit, in Rhode Island, which included Warren, Newport, Providence, Cranston, and several places in Massachusetts, appears on the minutes of this year; and the first Methodist church which was built in Rhode Island was in the town of Warren; and the first sermon was preached in it Sept. 24, 1794.

As perfect religious freedom was secured to the people by the original charter granted to the state of Rhode Island, and of course no form of Christianity was established by law, the Methodists met with less opposition there than they did in some other portions of New-England.

In Provincetown, on Cape Cod, which was first included in the minutes of 1795, there were some incidents attending the introduction of Methodism which, as they show the fruits of the carnal mind on the one hand, and the good providence of God on the other, may be worthy of record. It seems that a few in this place were brought under serious impressions, and began to hold meetings among themselves before they were visited by any preacher, and they had therefore no one competent to instruct and guide them. In this way they endeavored to strengthen each other's hands for some time, being much despised and persecuted by those who "knew not what spirit they were of," until one of our preachers, who was on his passage from New-York to St. John's, in New-Brunswick, meeting with contrary winds, the

vessel in which he sailed was compelled to anchor in the harbor of Provincetown. On going ashore, the preacher soon found these young converts, and at their invitation gave them a sermon. After staying with them a few days, and preaching several times, he left them with directions where they might apply for Methodist preachers. They accordingly sent to Boston for help, and were soon supplied.

In consequence of these movements, when the Methodist preachers first visited the place, they were cordially received, treated with great kindness, and many attended their meetings. A society was soon formed, and several sinners awakened and converted to God, and added to the society. Their number daily increasing, they commenced building a house of worship. This provoked opposition, and the "sons of Belial" assembled in the night, took the greater part of the timber, which had been brought from a distance, at a considerable expense, threw it from the brow of a hill into the valley, cut it to pieces and built a pen with it,—then taking a sailor's old hat, coat, and trowsers, stuffed them so as to make them resemble a man, fastened the image on the top of the pen, and tarred and feathered it. This shameful conduct, so far from intimidating the brethren, or discouraging them in their efforts to erect a house for the worship of God, only served to stimulate them to renewed diligence; and by the month of January they had their house ready for use, and accordingly took possession of it in the name of the Lord.

James O'Kelly, Rice Haggard, John Robertson, and John Allen, were returned in the minutes this

year as withdrawn. Eighteen were located, and one, James Bell, was expelled.

Benjamin Carter and John Sproul had died, both in peace.

In making the above record, we cannot but notice the number of locations which took place in those early days of the Church, and which, indeed, continued to be numerous for many years thereafter. That this practice has had an unfavorable effect upon the interests of the Church, by depriving it of some of its tried and experienced ministers, must be evident to all; for though many of those who located retained their piety, and also their usefulness to some extent, yet it is manifest that their ministerial labors were very much contracted, and their usefulness proportionably circumscribed. These locations, however, were owing, in some measure at least, to the scanty support which was made for men of families, and the great difficulty of contending, under those circumstances, with the hardships of an itinerant life, particularly in the new countries. Hence the temptations which were held out to locate that they might provide a livelihood for their growing families. If the Methodist Episcopal Church has erred in any one thing more than another, it has been in neglecting to make that provision for its ministers which they needed, and which the gospel authorizes them to receive. A remedy for this evil is to be found in that spirit of liberality which Christianity inculcates, and which is essential to the existence and usefulness of a gospel ministry.

The effect of the labors of this year may be seen in the following statement:—

Numbers in the Church

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year,	51,416	16,227	67,643	269
Last year,	52,109	13,871	65,980	266
Decrease,	693	In. 2,356	1,663	3

The reader will perceive that though there was an increase of 1,663 in the total number, there was a decrease of 693 among the white members. The effects of the O'Kellyan secession began to be felt, particularly in Virginia, and some parts of North Carolina.

1794. The number of annual conferences was reduced this year to fourteen, as some of the preachers had complained of there being so many at such short distances, among other reasons, because it prevented the minutes from being printed until near the end of the year. This inconvenience, however, should have been submitted to rather than to have made it necessary for the preachers to assemble from such a vast distance, at the expense of so much time and money, as many of them did when, afterward, the number of conferences was reduced to seven. At these conferences the following new circuits were returned in the minutes:—*Federal*, in Maryland; *Carlisle*, in Pennsylvania; *Leesburgh* and *Pendleton*, in Virginia; *Black Swamp*, in South Carolina; *New-Hampshire*, in New-Hampshire; *Marblehead*, *Orange*, and *Fitchburg*, in Mass.; and *Vermont*, in Vermont Oswegochee, in Upper Canada, was divided into two.

In some of the southern states, Methodism was doomed to much suffering, arising out of the disputes and divisions occasioned by the O'Kellyan secession,

which has been already detailed. But while these things were transacting in those parts, to the grief of many pious hearts, the cause of Christ, through the labors of his faithful servants, was extending in more favored portions of our country We have before seen, that as early as 1786, the Methodist preachers had penetrated the western wilderness beyond the Alleghany mountains, and that they had gradually extended their labors from year to year, being led on and encouraged in their work both by the example and precept of Bishop Asbury, who was generally in the foremost ranks when danger and hardship were to be encountered and endured. This year a conference was appointed to be held in Kentucky, on the 15th of April, and the bishop set off to meet his brethren at that place On the 20th of January he reached the city of Charleston, S. C., where he found himself so unwell, that he was obliged to relinquish his intended journey to the west; and that the reader may see for himself the manner in which this apostolic man employed his time, the extent of his labors in the cause of God, and the privations to which he was often subjected, we will endeavor to follow him in some of his journeyings this year. After mentioning the kindness and hospitality with which he had been treated in his affliction, while at Charleston, he says,—

"I have written largely to the west, and declined visiting those parts this year. The American Alps, the deep snows, the great rains, swimming the creeks and rivers, riding in the night, sleeping on the earthen floors, more or less of which I must experience, if I go to the western country, might, at this time, cost me my life. I have only

been able to preach four times in three weeks. I have had sweet peace at times since I have been here; the love of meetings, especially those for prayer, the increase of hearers, the attention of the people, my own better feelings, and the increasing hope of good that prevails among the preachers, lead me to think that the *needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the expectation of the poor perish.*"

He remained in Charleston, employing his time in the best manner he could, while endeavoring to recruit his exhausted strength, until February 28th, when he set off on a tour through different parts of the southern country, visiting the churches, and setting things in order. On the 20th of March, he says,—

"I directed my course, in company with my faithful fellow-laborer, Tobias Gibson, up the Catawba, settled mostly by the Dutch. A barren spot for religion. Having rode in pain twenty-four miles, we came, weary and hungry, to O——'s tavern, and were glad to take what came to hand. Four miles forward we came to Homes' Ford, upon Catawba river, where we could neither get a canoe nor guide. We entered the water in an improper place, and were soon among the rocks and in the whirlpools. My head swam, and my horse was affrighted. The water was to my knees, and it was with difficulty we retreated to the same shore. We then called to a man on the other side, who came and piloted us across, for which I paid him well. My horse being afraid to take the water a second time, brother Gibson crossed and sent me his, and our guide took mine across. We went on, but our troubles were not at an end; night came on and it was very dark. It rained heavily, with powerful lightning and thunder. We could not find the path that turned out to Connell's. In this situation we continued until midnight

or past. At last we found a path which we followed until we came to dear old father Harper's plantation; we made for the house, and called; he answered, but wondered who it could be; he inquired whence we came; I told him we would tell him when we came in; for it was raining so powerfully that we had not much time to talk. When I came dripping into the house, he cried, '*God bless your soul, is it brother Asbury? Wife, get up.*'"

After such a salutation they felt themselves at home, though much fatigued from their exposure and long ride.

After some farther remarks expressive of his thankfulness to God for the sweet peace of mind he enjoyed amid his physical sufferings and toilsome labors, he says, "This campaign has made me *groan, being burdened.*"—"I have provided brothers G. and L. for the westward. I wrote a plan for sta tioning, and desired the preachers to be, as I am, in the work. I have no interest, no passions, in their appointments; my only aim is to care and provide for the flock of Christ."—"I feel that my sufferings have been good preaching to me—especially in crossing the waters. I am solemnly moved in not visiting my Holstein and Kentucky brethren. It may be their interest to desire the preservation of my life. While living I may supply them with preachers, and with men and money. I feel resolved to be wholly the Lord's. Weak as I am, I have done nothing, I am nothing, only for Christ."

From this part of the country he came north, through Virginia, and on to Baltimore, where he took sweet counsel in the midst of his old friends. Thence he passed on through Pennsylvania, New-

Jersey, and New-York, visiting all the principal cities and towns on his way, attending conferences and preaching to the people, and passed into the New-England states. The following are some of his pointed remarks upon the state of things in this country :—

"Ah! here are walls of prejudice, but God can break them down. Out of fifteen United States, thirteen are free; but two are fettered with ecclesiastical chains—taxed to support ministers, who are chosen by a small committee, and settled for life.* My simple prophecy is, that this must come to an end with the present century.† The Rhode Islanders began in time and are free. Hail, sons of liberty! Who first began the war?" (of the revolution, doubtless is meant.) "Were it not Connecticut and Massachusetts? And priests are now saddled upon them. O what a happy people would these be, if they were not thus priest-riddén.‡ It is well for me that I am not stretching along, while my body is so weak, and the heat so intense." "I heard—read a most severe letter from a citizen of Vermont to the clergy and Christians of Connecticut, striking at the foundation and principle of the hierarchy and the policy of Yale College, and the independent order. It was expressive of the determination of the Vermonters to continue free from ecclesiastical fetters, to follow the Bible, equal liberty to all denominations of Christians. If so, why may not the Methodists, who have been repeatedly solicited, visit these people also?"

* It is not, I believe, generally the case, that a minister is settled for life.

† It has come to an end, though not quite so soon as there predicted.

‡ The bishop undoubtedly alludes to their being supported by law—by a legal taxation, which he considered contrary to the gospel—and not to the fact simply of their having stated pastors.

These extracts show, in a striking manner, the immense labors performed by this primitive bishop, in the name of Jesus Christ. Nor was he alone in these labors. His example provoked others to follow in his footsteps, who, though they were not called to travel so extensively, were equally assiduous, and alike successful in their endeavors to plant the standard of Jesus Christ in various parts of this continent. Among others we may mention a *William Watters*, the first Methodist preacher raised up in America, who traversed the western wilds, and labored in the woods of Kentucky; a *Garrettson*, who opened the way into the interior of New-York state, and penetrated even to Vermont; a *Lee*, who led the way into New-England, and laid the foundation for that work of God there which has since reared itself in beauty and glory, amid "fightings without and fears within;" a *Roberts* and a *Cooper*, who followed in the track marked out for them by *Lee*, and nobly stood their ground amid storms of reproach, and "labors more abundant." These leaders of "God's sacramental host" being aided by their associates, all zealous for God and for the salvation of souls, were scattering the "good seed of the kingdom" in every direction, and we who have followed them have had the happiness of seeing it "take root and bear fruit," in some places *thirty*, in others *sixty*, and in some *a hundred fold.*

In the preceding extract from Bishop Asbury's Journal, we have seen that he alludes to Vermont, to which they had been solicited to send preachers. It is well known that in this state there were no legal barriers in the way of any denomination of Christians,

but that all were permitted the free and unrestrained exercise of their peculiarities. Although as early as 1788 Mr. Garrettson had visited the southern borders of the state, and preached in a few places, it was not until this year that any of our preachers obtained a permanent foothold there; but this year, *Joshua Hull* was sent to Vermont, and his labors were made a blessing to many. Since that time the cause of Methodism has advanced rapidly among the people in almost every part of the state, to the reformation and salvation of thousands of souls.

This year also Methodism was introduced into the province of Maine, by the indefatigable labors of Jesse Lee. In Portland he preached in the Congregational church, and then passed on through Freeport and Bath, crossed the Kennebeck river, and went as far as the town of Penobscot. In most of the places he was cordially received, and succeeded in forming a regular circuit, and this laid a foundation for the permanent establishment of Methodism in Maine. He gives the following account of his first visit to Portsmouth:—

"Sunday the 8th of September, I went to hear Mr. Watters in the forenoon and in the afternoon. After he was done, I went with some friends to the court-house, but the great men would not let us go into the house to preach, so I got on the step of the door of the court-house and began. When I commenced I had about a dozen people, but they soon began to flock together, and I had some hundreds of them to hear me before I had done. They stood in different parts of the streets. I found much freedom in speaking, and the word reached many of the hearts of the hearers, who were as solemn and attentive as though they had been in a meeting house."

It may be remarked that the settlements along the Penobscot river at that time had been newly formed, and were destitute of settled pastors; hence the people were much gratified with the visit of Mr. Lee, and those who succeeded him; and though he had to contend with many difficulties, as a stranger bearing a message differing in so many particulars from what they had been accustomed to hear, yet God gave him favor in the eyes of the people, and strength to persevere in his good work, until he had opened a way for the establishment of regular preaching in that destitute part of the country.

New-Hampshire was also visited about this time. *John Hill* was the first Methodist preacher sent into that state: but with what success I cannot tell, as we do not find any members returned on the minutes in that state for this year.

At the several annual conferences for this year, the following resolutions were passed:—

"It is most earnestly recommended by the conferences, that the last Friday in February, 1795, be set apart throughout the United States, by the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as a day of solemn fasting and prayer, and that all worldly concerns be laid aside.

"It is also recommended by said conferences, that the last Thursday in October be set apart as a day of solemn and general thanksgiving, and that all servile labor be laid aside, and those days be observed with all the solemnity of a Sabbath."

They furthermore said, "The bishops and conferences desire that the preachers generally change every six months, by the order of the presiding elder, whenever it can be made convenient."

No less than twenty-eight preachers took a location this year, either in consequence of "weakness of body or family concerns." Two, *Jeremiah Cosdon* and *Jethro Johnson*, withdrew from the connection; and four were "dismissed for improper conduct." Four had died, namely, *Philip Cox*, *Henry Birchett*, *James Wilson*, and *John Wayne*.

Of *Philip Cox*, who was an Englishman by birth, it is stated that he had been sixteen years in the ministry, during which time he had traveled extensively in several of the states, and preached the gospel with considerable success. He was a man of sound judgment, of quick apprehension, and a great lover of union, and often prayed and preached to the admiration of his hearers. He was among the pioneers of the western wilds, where he labored assiduously and strove to do good by the circulation of religious books. On his return from the west he was seized with a complaint which soon put a period to his existence. Though in his last moments, through the violence of his disease, he was, for the most part of the time, delirious, yet he gave evidence to his friends that he died in peace.

Henry Birchett fell a martyr to his work, after having been in the traveling ministry only between five and six years. He was a native of Brunswick county, Virginia. He volunteered his services for four years in the dangerous stations of Kentucky and Cumberland, and wore himself out in preaching the gospel in these new countries. His name, therefore, stands enrolled among those worthy and self-denying men who hazarded their all for the sake of carrying the glad tidings of the gospel to the poor

and the destitute, exposed to hunger, cold, and nakedness, and to the depredations of savages: for such was the state of things in Kentucky and other places where he traveled, that often even the *necessaries* of life could not be had, nor the wildernesses traversed without the danger of being intercepted by savage foes. But the meekness, love, prayers, sermons, and sufferings in the cause of Christ of *Henry Birchett*, will not be forgotten by the sons and daughters of Kentucky, who have reaped spiritual benefit from the work which was commenced by his labors and sacrifices, and has been since carried forward by his successors in the ministry.

Of *James Wilson* and *John Wayne*, it is said that, after the former had labored in the ministry about six, and the latter about four years, with general acceptance, they both died in peace.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year,	52,794	13,814	66,608	301
Last year,	51,416	16,227	67,643	269
Decrease,			1,035	In. 32

1795. The number of annual conferences was reduced this year to seven, greatly to the inconvenience of the preachers, and it is believed to the detriment of the work of God. This diminution in the number of the conferences was made in consequence of the general opposition of the preachers to having so many, by which they thought the powers of the conferences were abridged, and those of the bishop proportionably augmented; and hence, to take away all such ground of fear, the bishops yielded to the

wishes of their brethren, notwithstanding they were satisfied that, otherwise, it was not for the best.

Some idea may be formed of the extent of the annual conferences at this time, when it is remembered that the New-York conference comprehended within its bounds most of the state of New-York, the whole of New-England, and the province of Upper Canada; out of which have been since formed, the New-England, Maine, New-Hampshire, Troy, Oneida, Black River, and part of Genesee and the Canada conferences; and the other conferences were proportionably great in extent. Some of the circuits at that time included a larger extent of territory than districts do now,—a four weeks' circuit often being not less than four hundred miles in circumference, and including from twenty to forty appointments in thirty days. Such were the labors of the Methodist ministry in those days.

In consequence of reducing the number of annual conferences to seven, some of the preachers, who labored in the frontier circuits, had to come from two to four hundred miles to attend the conferences, which obliged them to leave their regular work from three to six weeks, during which time the people were unsupplied with the word and ordinances of the gospel. This, in addition to the expense of time and money consumed in traveling such a distance, was an evil of no small magnitude, and against which a remedy has been since wisely provided in an increase of the number of the annual conferences.

But the reduction in the number of conferences diminished naught from the labors of the superintendent, nor of those preachers who were fighting the battles of the Lord in different parts of the great field in

which they were employed. The former made his usual tour of the continent, extending his labors this year into the state of Vermont, where he preached in the woods in the town of Bennington, to a congregation made up, he says, of Deists, Universalists, and other sinners, some of whom seemed to be melted to tenderness under the word.

About this time the minds of many people were corrupted by the deistical writings of Thomas Paine, whose effusions against the Bible were received with greater avidity by Americans on account of the eminent services he had rendered to his country during the war of the revolution. But Thomas Paine as a politician and Thomas Paine as a theologian were very different men. His book, however, against the Bible, was published by the booksellers, which, together with others of a kindred character, were widely circulated, and they were exerting a most deleterious influence upon the minds of many of our citizens, and threatened to poison the fountains of knowledge with their pestiferous contents. It could hardly be otherwise, under these circumstances, than that immorality should abound, and the "love of many wax cold." And the unrestrained freedom of the press, together with the laxity with which the laws against vice were administered, threatened to deluge the country with ungodliness. To impress upon all, and more especially upon the members and friends of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the necessity of a more thorough and extensive reformation among all orders of people, a "GENERAL FAST" was recommended by the several annual conferences, in the following address to the people of their charge:—

"It is recommended by the general traveling ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, that the first Friday in March, 1796, should be held as a most solemn day of fasting, humiliation, prayer, and supplication. It is desired that it should be attended to in all our societies and congregations, with Sabbatical strictness—that we should bewail our manifold sins and iniquities—our growing idolatry, which is covetousness and the prevailing love of the world—our shameful breach of promises, and irreligious habits of making contracts, even without the intention of honest heathens to fulfil them—our superstition, the trusting in ceremonial and legal righteousness; and substituting means and opinions for religion—the profanation of the name of the Lord—the contempt of the Sabbath, even by those who acknowledge the obligation we are under to keep it holy, for many make no distinction between this and a common day, and others make a very bad distinction, by sleeping, walking, visiting, talking about the world, and taking their pleasure; too many also, in many parts of the country, profane the sacred day, by running their land and water stages, wagons, &c.,—disobedience to parents, various debaucheries, drunkenness, and such like—to lament the deep-rooted vassalage that still reigneth in many parts of these free, independent United States—to call upon the Lord to direct our rulers and teach our senators wisdom—that the Lord would teach our people a just and lawful submission to their rulers—that America may not commit abominations with other corrupt nations of the earth, and partake of their sins and their plagues—that the gospel may be preached with more purity, and be heard with more affection—that He would stop the growing infidelity of this age, by calling out men who shall preach and live the gospel—that the professors may believe the truths, feel the power, partake of the blessings, breathe the spirit, and obey the precepts of this glorious gospel dispensation—

that Africans and Indians may help to fill the pure church of God."

At the same time, with a view to manifest their gratitude for what God had done, and for the many temporal and spiritual mercies vouchsafed unto the people, a day of "GENERAL THANKSGIVING," was also recommended in the words following:—

"It is recommended, by the general ministry, to all our dearly beloved brethren and sisters that compose our societies and sacred assemblies, to observe the last Thursday in October, 1796, as a day of holy gratitude and thanksgiving—to lay aside the cares of the world, and to spend the day in acts of devotional gratitude—as a society, to give glory to God for his late goodness to the ancient parent society from whom we are derived: that they have been honored with the conversion of hundreds and thousands within these two years last past—for such a signal display of his power in the Methodist society, within the space of twenty-six years, through the continent of America, as may be seen in the volume of our annual minutes, published in 1795—for the late glorious and powerful work we have had in Virginia and Maryland, and which still continues in an eminent and special manner, in some parts of our American connection—for the many faithful public witnesses which have been raised up, and that so few, (comparatively speaking,) have dishonoured their holy calling—that we have had so many drawn from the depths of sin and misery, to the heights of love and holiness among the subjects of grace; numbers of whom are now living, and others have died in the full and glorious triumph of faith—to take into remembrance the goodness and wisdom of God displayed toward America, by making it an asylum for those who are distressed in Europe with war and want, and oppressed with ecclesiastic and civil tyranny; the

merciful termination of our various wars; the pacifications of the savage tribes; and the rapid settlement and wonderful population of the continent; that we have been able to feed so many thousands, at home and abroad; that we have had such faithful, wise, and skilful rulers; that we have such good constitutions formed for the respective states —for the general union and government, that this may be kept pure and permanent—for the admirable revolution obtained and established at so small a price of blood and treasure—that religious establishments by law are condemned and exploded in almost every spot of this extensive empire. And for African liberty; we feel gratitude that many thousands of these poor people are free and pious."

The work of God spread this year in several parts of New-England, more particularly in the province of Maine, New-Hampshire, and Vermont, and also in the northern and western parts of the state of New-York. But nothing occurred in this department worthy of special notice.

No less than *thirty-two* preachers located this year, *three* withdrew from the church, and *five* had died.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	48,121	12,170	60,291	313
Last year	52,794	13,814	66,608	301
Decrease	4,673	1,644	6,317	In. 12

This great decrease was owing, in a great measure, to the O'Kellyan division, which was now at its height, and was spreading desolation in many of the societies in Virginia, and also in some parts of North Carolina.

1796. There were seven annual conferences held this year: and the following new circuits were added: *Shelby* and *Logan*, in the Western Conference; *Bath* and *Kennebec*, in the province of Maine; *Cape May*, in New-Jersey; *Chesterfield*, in New-Hampshire; and *Vershire*, in Vermont.

This year a conference was held at Green Briar, in the upper part of Virginia, which Bishop Asbury attended; after which he set off on another tour over the mountains and through the valleys.

"Frequently," he says, "we were in danger of being plucked from our horses by the boughs of the trees under which we rode. About seven o'clock, after crossing six mountains and many rocky creeks and fords of Elk and Monongahela rivers, we made the *Valley of Distress*, called by the natives Tyger's Valley. We had a comfortable lodging at Mr. White's. And here I must acknowledge the kindness and decency of the family, and their readiness to duty, sacred and civil. Thence we hastened on at the rate of forty-two miles a day."—"After encountering many difficulties, known only to God and ourselves, we came to Morgantown. I doubt whether I shall ever request any person to come and meet me at the levels of Green Briar, or to accompany me across the mountains again, as brother D. Hitt has now done. O! how checkered is life! How thankful ought I to be that I am here safe, with life and limbs, in peace and plenty, at kind brother S——'s."

After performing this fatiguing journey, visiting various places and preaching to the people, he once more found himself in more comfortable quarters in the older states, where he persevered with his wonted diligence in the grand work to which he had been called, and in which his soul delighted. After arriv-

ing at Baltimore, he takes a "review of his journey for some months past," which, as it will give the reader some idea of the manner in which the bishop employed his time, we will present in his own words:

"From the best judgment I can form, the distance" (I have traveled) "is as follows:—from Baltimore to Charleston, S. C., one thousand miles; thence up the state of South Carolina two hundred miles; from the centre to the west of Georgia two hundred miles; through North Carolina one hundred miles; through the state of Tennessee one hundred miles; through the west of Virginia three hundred miles; through Pennsylvania and the west of Maryland, and down to Baltimore, four hundred miles." And the reader will recollect that these journeys were performed generally on horseback, sometimes through creeks, morasses, and over high mountains, often lodging in log cabins, or on the ground, with coarse fare, and in the meantime preaching usually every day. It is true that in the older settlements he was not only cordially received and treated with great hospitality, but was blessed with an abundance of temporal comforts. And the above is but a fair specimen of the mode of life pursued by most of the Methodist preachers of that day, with this exception only, that they did not travel so extensively as Bishop Asbury did.

The work of God spread this year in some parts of New-England, particularly in the province of Maine, and in the states of New-Hampshire and Vermont. Alluding to these things, while on his visit to that part of the country, Bishop Asbury remarks:—

"This day I was led out greatly for New-England. I believe God will work among this people. Perhaps they

have not had such a time here for many years. The power of God was present, and some felt as at heaven's gate. Two or three women spoke as on the borders of eternity, and within sight of glory."

It may be proper to remark here, that Bishop Asbury, wherever he was, did not content himself simply with preaching to the people, but if time permitted, met the classes, explained to them the discipline, and attended to all the duties of a pastor. Thus, speaking of being in the city of New-York, he says that he "preached morning, afternoon, and evening, alternately in each of the three churches then in the city, besides meeting six classes in the course of the day."—"In meeting the society, I observed to them, that they knew but little of my life and labors, unless in the pulpit, family, or class meeting,"—intimating that it was impossible for them to have any adequate idea of his general labors and sufferings through the country.

This year that eminent servant of God, *Benjamin Abbott*, took his departure to another world. And as his life and labors made a powerful impression upon the community, and tended greatly to enlarge the work of God wherever he traveled, it seems suitable that a more particular account should be given of him than of some others.

He was born in the state of Pennsylvania, in the year 1732, and grew to manhood "without hope and without God in the world," and so continued until the fortieth year of his age, when it pleased God to bring him to a knowledge of the truth by the instrumentality of Methodist preaching. Soon after his conversion he gave evidence of his call to the gospel

ministry, and he entered upon this work with an ardor of mind which plainly evinced that he was moving in the order of God, and it may be truly said that "signs and wonders were wrought" by his instrumentality. For several years he labored merely as a local preacher, supporting himself and family by the labor of his hands. He continued in this way greatly blessed in his efforts to bring sinners to the knowledge of Christ, until April, 1789, when he joined the traveling ministry, and was stationed in Dutchess circuit, in the state of New-York. From this time till disabled by infirmities, he continued traveling and preaching through various parts of New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware states, edifying the church by his example and labors, and he was an instrument in the hand of God of the awakening and conversion of thousands of souls. As some portions of his life were attended with remarkable interpositions of divine Providence and peculiar manifestations of the grace of God, I think it will be both pleasing and profitable to the reader to present a few of the instances in this place. While laboring in the state of Delaware, he gives the following account:

"Next day I set out for my appointment, but being a stranger, I stopped at a house to inquire the way, and the man told me he was just going to that place, for there was to be a Methodist preacher there that day; and our preacher, said he, is to be there to trap him in his discourse, and if you will wait a few minutes until a neighbor of mine comes, I will go with you. In a few minutes the man came, who, it seems, was a constable. So we set off, and they soon fell into conversation about the preacher, having no idea of my being the man, as I never wore black, or any kind of

garb that indicated my being a preacher, and so I rode unsuspected. The constable being a very profane man, he swore by all the gods he had, good and bad, that he would lose his right arm from his body if the Methodist preacher did not go to jail that day. This was the theme of their discourse. My mind was greatly exercised on the occasion, and what added, as it were, double weight, I was a stranger in a strange place, where I knew no one. When we arrived at the place appointed, I saw about two hundred horses hitched. I also hitched mine, and retired into the woods, where I prayed and covenanted with God on my knees, that if he stood by me in this emergency, I would be more for him, through grace, than ever I had been. I then arose and went to my horse, with a perfect resignation to the will of God, whether to death or to jail. I took my saddlebags and went to the house; the man took me into a private room, and desired I would preach in favor of the war, as I was in a Presbyterian settlement. I replied, I should preach as God should direct me. He appeared very uneasy and left me, and just before preaching, he came in again and renewed his request that I would preach up for war; I replied as before, and then followed him out among the people, where he made proclamation as follows:—Gentlemen, this house is my own, and no gentleman shall be interrupted in my house in time of his discourse, but after he has done you may do as you please. Thank God, said I softly, that I have liberty once more to warn sinners before I die. I then took my stand, and the house was so crowded that no one could sit down. Some hundreds were round about the door. I stood about two or three feet from the constable who had sworn so bitterly. When he saw that I was the man he had so abused on the way, with so many threats and oaths, his countenance fell and he turned pale. I gave out a hymn, but no one offered to sing; I sung four lines, and kneeled down and

prayed. When I arose, I preached with great liberty. I felt such power from God rest upon me, that I was above the fear of either men or devils, not regarding whether death or a jail should be my lot. Looking forward I saw a decent looking man trembling, and tears flowed in abundance, which I soon discovered was the case with many others. After preaching, I told them I expected they wanted to know by what authority I had come into that country to preach. I then told them my conviction and conversion, the place of my nativity and place of residence; also, my call to the ministry, and that seven years I had labored in God's vineyard; that I spent my own money and found and wore my own clothes, and that it was the love that I had for their precious souls, for whom Christ died, that had induced me to come among them at the risk of my life; and then exhorted them to fly to Jesus, the ark of safety—that all things were ready—to seek, and they should find, to knock, and it should be opened unto them. By this time the people were generally melted into tears. I then concluded, and told them on that day two weeks they might expect preaching again. I mounted my horse and set out with a friendly Quaker for a pilot. We had not rode above fifty yards, when I heard one hallooing after us. I looked back, and saw about fifty running after us. I then concluded that to jail I must go. We stopped, and when they came up, I crave your name, said one,—I told him, and so we parted. He was a justice of the peace, and was the person I had taken notice of in time of preaching, and observed him to be in great anxiety of mind. No one offered me any violence; but they committed the next preacher, on that day two weeks, to the common jail. I went home with the kind Quaker, where I tarried all night. I found that himself and wife were under serious impressions, and had had Methodist preaching at their house."

Though Mr. Wesley gives several accounts in his Journals of some persons being so affected under his preaching as to fall helpless to the floor or on the ground, yet such things had not been common in this country. It is true that in the great revival which took place in Virginia in the early days of Methodism, several such instances are recorded. But under the powerful preaching of Mr. Abbott many examples of a partial suspension of the animal functions occurred, as the following extract will show :—

"Next day I went on to my appointment, where we had a large congregation : I preached with life and power, and God attended the word with the energy of his Spirit. A Quaker girl was powerfully wrought upon, so that every joint in her shook, and she would have fallen to the floor, but four or five took and carried her out of the door ; when she had recovered a little she went to a neighbor's house and told him that she had seen the dreadfulest old man that she ever saw in all her life, and that he almost scared her to death, for his eyes looked like two balls of fire, and that she expected every minute he would jump at her. But, said the neighbor, I know the old man, and he would not hurt nor touch you. I went on, and the power of the Lord continued among us in such a manner that many fell to the floor, and others cried aloud for mercy. One young woman rose and began to exhort the people ; I stopped preaching, which I always judged was best, in similar instances, and let God send by whom he will send : she went on for some time with great life and power, and then cried out, Let us pray ; we all kneeled down, and she prayed with life and liberty, until she was spent and so forbore. A preacher being present, I called on him, and he went to prayer, and while he was praying three were set at liberty ; and, after him, myself and others prayed

and several received justifying faith. The shout continued for the space of three or four hours. After meeting broke up, I thought it was not necessary to meet the class, as we had such a powerful time, and it had lasted so long already. The young woman who had given the exhortation and prayed, took five others with her, and retired to the barn to pray for the mourners, who went with them, where they continued until late in the evening, and three souls were set at liberty; another, as she was returning home, in sore distress, fell on her face in the woods, where she continued in prayer until God set her soul at liberty to rejoice in his love. An old Presbyterian woman requested me to call at her house on the ensuing day, as she wanted to discourse with me on religion; I did call, and she received me very kindly, and then related her conviction and conversion, and added, that some years after, God had sealed her his to the day of eternity; and, said she, neither our preachers or people will believe me, when I tell them how happy I am. I then endeavored to explain to her the nature of sanctification, and what it was, and asked her if we should pray together; she replied, With all my heart. After prayer I departed in peace, having no doubt but what God had sanctified her soul and body. She was the first Presbyterian that I ever had met with, that would acknowledge sanctification in its proper sense.

"I went to my next appointment, where I had put brother G. D., who professed sanctification, class leader, and the Lord attended his words with power. This had brought the man of the house where the class met into doubts, whether the work was of God or the devil; for the people had frequently fallen, both under his prayer and exhortation. Soon as I came to the house he related how great his exercises had been respecting the work. One day, said he, I thought I would go down to my stack yard, which stood some distance

from the house, and there pray to God to discover the reality of it to me; and on my way thither, as I sat on a fence, I thought I saw a man sitting on the next pannel; I got off and went down to the stacks, and the man went with me, side by side, and when I kneeled down to pray, the man stood right before me. I prayed until my shirt was wet on my back, intreating God that he would give me some token, whereby I might know whether the work was of him or not. The man who stood before me said, Blessed are those that are pure in heart. I then arose to see whether he was a man or not, and went to put my hand upon him, and he said, *Touch me not!* I then turned myself round another way, and he stood right before me again, and said several other words which I do not relate, and then vanished, or ascended, as in a flame of fire. Now, said I, do you doubt about the matter, whether the work is of God or not? No, said he, I have no doubts about it, for God has sent his angel to confirm me. I then went and preached,—the Lord was present. We had a glorious time, and several fell to the floor; we had a precious time also in class, and two joined society.

"Next day I went to my appointment, and found a large congregation. I preached, and the power of the Lord attended the word. One young man sprang from the bench and cried aloud for mercy, then fell on his knees and prayed fervently. I stopped preaching, and when he was done, I went to prayer with him, and after me several others; many wept, some cried aloud for mercy, and others fell to the floor. When I dismissed the people to meet class, I invited the young man in. Here we had a precious season among the dear people of God, and some mourners were set at liberty." * * * * *

"I went home with brother M., and next day preached to a crowded house, with liberty: the power of the Lord arrested a young Quaker, and he fell to the floor as if he

had been shot: his mother being present, cried out, My son is dead! My son is dead! I replied, Mammy, your son is not dead; look to yourself, mammy, your son is not dead; and in a few minutes we had a number slain before the Lord. An old Quaker man stood with tears in his eyes; I said to him, Daddy, look to yourself; this was the way with you, when you had the life and power of God among you. Read Sewel's History of the people called Quakers, and you will find there that John Audland, a young man, was preaching in a field near Bristol, and the people fell to the ground before him, and cried out under the mighty power of God. The man of the house brought the book, and read the passage before the congregation, and he then acknowledged it to be the work of the Lord. I attempted to meet the class, but did not speak to above two or three, when the people fell before the Lord, as men slain in battle, and we had the shout of a king in the camp of Jesus: two or three professed that God had sanctified their souls. The young Quaker and several others professed that God had set their souls at liberty; several joined society, and we had a precious time. When I went on that circuit, there were about six or seven in society at that place, and when I left it there were about thirty-six, six or seven of whom had been Quakers. At this place, our meetings were generally so powerful that I never regularly met the class during the time I was on the circuit—for we always had the shout of a king in the camp of Jesus—glory to God!"

These instances serve to show the power and authority by which Benjamin Abbott spoke in the name of the Lord; and though there might have been some human weakness mingling with these signal displays of the power of God, yet it is manifest that in most

cases the work was genuine, as appeared by its fruits; for "by their fruits ye shall know them."

The writer of his life gives the following very affecting account of an incident which strikingly exemplifies the tenderness of his conscience and the humility of his mind:—

"On his way to a quarterly meeting, about the first of February, 1795, the presiding elder mentioned to him, 'that the people there thought he had power by faith to open or shut the gates of heaven.' Mr. Abbott said to me, when conversing on this subject, 'It went through my soul like a dagger: I was grieved, for I saw that the idea led to idolatry, in ascribing to a poor mortal the power which is due to God only. I felt as if my usefulness were at an end; although I did not discover to brother W——, the presiding elder, how exceedingly I was hurt, nor was he, I believe, sensible of it.' They attended the quarterly meeting in great harmony, and the Master of assemblies was present to the joy and consolation of many. At night Mr. Abbott was taken very ill, and never was able to attend a circuit as a traveling preacher, or scarcely ever to preach afterward; so that his usefulness, indeed, was, in one sense, at an end."

The labors of Mr. Abbott were unremitting and most arduous, so that it may be said he literally wore himself out in the service of his divine Master. The last public service he performed was at the funeral of Mrs. Paul, in the town of Salem, N. J., in the month of April, 1796, and as it was attended with a remarkable incident, evincing the blessed results of ministerial faithfulness, I will give it in the words of the biographer. It is as follows:—

"After the funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Mor-

ford, he arose and gave an exhortation, and particularly addressed himself to Mr. W., a man whom he had loved as himself, and who had, through the subtilty of Satan, departed from better knowledge. In his exhortation he called to mind the happy hours he had spent under his roof; how much he (Mr. W.) had done for the cause of God; and how often they had rejoiced together as fellow-laborers in Christ Jesus; and then warned him in the most solemn manner of his impending danger, in the love and fear of God, until tears flowed, his strength failed, and he was unable to speak any longer.

"While the interment of the corpse took place, Mr. Abbott retired to a friend's house, unable to attend it. After the interment, Mr. W. addressed the audience on the occasion and appeared angry, apprehending that he had been ill used. I spoke to him on the occasion, and endeavored to reason the case with him; but to very little purpose, for he apprehended that I had been the instigator of the supposed affront, and appeared as much offended with me as with Mr. Abbott. After my return from the interment, I went and informed Mr. Abbott of the matter: 'Why,' said he, 'if I were able to take my horse and go and see him, I should not have made use of that opportunity; but as I am not able to go and see him, I was convinced that if I let that opportunity pass, I should never have another; and I thought it my duty to speak as I did: therefore I leave the event to God. I am sure that it cannot hurt him, or do him any injury; for a man that is posting in the broad way to damnation, cannot be easily worsted. O! said he, 'I have seen the time that we have rejoiced together as fellow-laborers in Christ, and it grieves my soul to see that the devil has got the advantage of him!' On Mr. W.'s return home, he wrote a letter to Mr. Abbott on the occasion, justifying himself and his conduct. However, the Spirit of God fastened it on him, as a nail

in a sure place; for at our first quarterly meeting held at Salem, after Mr. Abbott's death, in the love feast, Mr. W. arose and openly declared that God had healed all his backslidings, and that he had made his servant, Father Abbott, an instrument in his divine hand to bring about his restoration."

After lingering along the shores of time for several months, he finally closed his life in triumph on the 14th day of August, 1796, aged about sixty-four years. The following is an account of the closing scene of his life :—

"My brother went to see him, and found him very poorly, to whom he said, 'Brother Ffirth, I am going to die, and to-morrow you must go to Philadelphia, for brother M'Claskey to come and preach my funeral sermon:' to which my brother replied, 'Father Abbott, you may continue for some time yet, as the time of your death is uncertain.' 'No,' said he, 'I shall die before you would get back from Philadelphia, unless you should travel in the night.' My brother replied, 'It will not answer to go before your decease.' 'Why,' said he, 'I shall die, and I do not wish my body kept until it is offensive: you know the weather is warm and the distance is considerable.' 'That is true,' replied my brother, 'but if I were to go to Philadelphia for brother M'Claskey, to preach your funeral sermon, and you not dead, the friends would laugh at me, and he would not come.' 'Ah!' said he, 'it may be so; I never thought of that; perhaps it will be best to stay until I am dead.'

"Next day, observing a visible alteration in him, my brother concluded to tarry with him until his exit: during the day he continued in a rack of excruciating pain, which he bore with Christian patience and resignation. He was

happy in God, and rejoiced at his approaching dissolution; and seemed much engaged in his soul with God. He appeared to possess his rational faculties to his last moments; and for some time previous thereunto he was delivered from that excruciating pain, to the joy of his friends; his countenance continued joyful, heavenly, and serene. His last sentence, that was intelligibly articulated, was, 'Glory to God! I see heaven sweetly opened before me!'

"After this, his speech so much failed that he could not be distinctly understood, only now and then a word, as, '*See!—see!—glory!—glory!*' &c."

Mr. Abbott was, in many respects, a remarkable man; not, indeed, on account of his intellectual or literary attainments, for he was extremely illiterate, and of very limited information. Were we, therefore, to measure his standard of excellence as a preacher by the usual rules by which it is determined, he would sink perhaps below mediocrity; for such was his deficiency in respect to his knowledge even of his vernacular tongue that he could scarcely express himself grammatically on any subject; yet with all these defects, he had drunk so deeply at the fountain of spiritual life, had made himself so thoroughly acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and had such an accurate knowledge of the human heart, and was, moreover, so deeply impressed by the Holy Spirit that it was his duty to call sinners to repentance, that whenever he spoke in the name of the Lord there was an "unction from the Holy One" attending his word, which made it manifest to all that he was sent from heaven to beseech mankind to be reconciled to God.

Though a Boanerges or son of thunder in the pulpit, especially in his appeals to the impenitent, yet

in private circles, in conversation with his friends, and in his addresses to mourning penitents, he was all love and meekness, manifesting the simplicity and docility of a child. But that which distinguished him most eminently among his fellows was the power which he seemed to have with God in prayer. Perhaps he seldom entered the pulpit, or appeared before a congregation as God's messenger, without previously "wrestling in the strength of mighty prayer," and God did indeed "reward him openly." Many were the instances in which his heavenly Father answered his "strong cries and tears," while pouring out the desire of his heart before him in prayer. And let it be recollected that *such* prayer, which takes hold on God, always supposes the exercise of *strong faith* in Jesus Christ, that faith which says, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me."

Such was Benjamin Abbott. And though we cannot enroll him among those who have distinguished themselves by scientific research, or deep theological knowledge, yet we may inscribe upon his tombstone, *Here lies the man whom God delighted to honor as the instrument of saving many sinners from the error of their ways.* Through his energetic labors an impulse was given to the work of God in this country which has been felt through all our borders from that day to this; and hence his name may be fitly associated with those who were honored of God in building up our Zion as on a hill, from which light has been reflected on thousands who have been brought under its holy and happy influence.

Another distinguished, though humble and unpretending servant of God was taken this year from the

militant to the church triumphant. *Francis Acuff.* born in Virginia, and brought up in Tennessee, has left a name in the west which will be remembered with grateful recollections while Methodism shall continue to live and flourish in that country. He resided in Holstein, Tennessee; and though only three years in the traveling ministry, yet such were his talents and indefatigable labors in the work, that he won the confidence and affection of the people for whose salvation he devoted his strength; they lamented over his untimely grave as over the remains of a departed friend. He had only attained to the twenty-fifth year of his age when he was cut down as a flower, in the morning, and taken to ripen in the paradise of God.

As an instance of the strong attachment which was felt by those who were best acquainted with this man of God, I will give the following anecdote on the authority of the author of "Short Sketches of Revivals of Religion in the Western Country." An Englishman by the name of William Jones, on his arrival in Virginia, was sold for his passage. He served his time, four years, with fidelity, conducted himself with propriety, and was finally brought to the knowledge of the truth by means of Methodist preaching. As he had been greatly blessed under the preaching of Mr. Acuff, when he heard of his death, Billy, as he was called, determined to visit his grave. Though he had to travel a long distance through the wilderness, in which he had heard that the Indians often killed people by the way, yet his great desire to visit the grave of his friend and pastor impelled him forward, believing that the Lord in whom he trusted was able to protect him

from savage cruelty, and provide for his wants. "When I came to the rivers," said he, "I would wade them, or if there were ferries they would take me over, and when I was hungry the travelers would give me a morsel of bread. When I came to Mr. Greene's, in Madison county, I inquired for our dear brother Acuff's grave. The people looked astonished, but directed me to it. I went to it, felt my soul happy, kneeled down, shouted over it, and praised the Lord!" Such a mark of strong affection in a simple follower of Jesus Christ speaks volumes in favor of the man over whose grave those grateful recollections were so piously indulged.

Another of the veterans who fell in the field this year deserves a passing notice. *Reuben Ellis* had traveled extensively, and preached with great acceptance for about twenty years. He is said to have been a man of rather a slow apprehension, but of a sound understanding, possessed of godly simplicity and sincerity, and that his preaching was weighty and powerful. In his life he manifested great deadness to the world, living as in the immediate view of eternity. He was a native of North Carolina, and in the notice of his death it is stated that the people of the south "well knew his excellent worth, as a Christian and a minister of Christ."

After laboring in various parts of the country, leaving behind him evidences of his fidelity and deep devotion to the cause of God, he closed his useful labors in the city of Baltimore, in the month of February, 1796, in the full hope of everlasting life. Some estimate may be formed of the high character he sustained by the fact, that the record of his death

says, "It is a doubt whether there be one left in all the connection higher, if equal, in standing, piety, or usefulness."

Jacob Brush, *Stephen Davis*, *William Jessup*, *Richard Ivy*, *John Jarrell*, and *Zadoc Priest*, of whom honorable mention is made, all died this year in the full hope of immortality and eternal life.

In the early part of our history we have seen the kindness manifested to Mr. Asbury by *Judge White* of Kent county, Delaware state, during his seclusion from the fury of his persecutors. It is pleasant to reflect on the latter end of such men, and to see how the Lord rewarded them for their attentions to his servants. Last year Judge White died "in the Lord," and though he was not a preacher, the death of such a man is deserving a place in this record of the Lord's dealings with his church. The following is Bishop Asbury's account of the character and death of this good man:—

"This day," May 21, 1795, "I heard of the death of one among my best friends in America, Judge White, of Kent county, Delaware. This news was attended with an awful shock to me. I have met with nothing like it in the death of any friend on the continent. Lord help us to live our short day to thy glory! I have lived days, weeks, and months, in his house. O that his removal may be sanctified to my good, and the good of the family! He was about sixty-five years of age. He was a friend to the poor and oppressed. He had been a professed Churchman, and was united to the Methodist connection about seventeen or eighteen years. His house and heart were always open; and he was a faithful friend to liberty in spirit and in practice; he was a most indulgent husband,

a tender father, and an affectionate friend. He professed perfect love and great peace, living and dying."

Such a testimony is alike honorable to him who made it, and to him in whose favor it was recorded, showing the gratitude and affectionate remembrance of the one, and the disinterested friendship and fidelity of the other.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
Last year,	48,121	12,170	60,291	313
This year,	45,384	11,280	56,664	293
Decrease,	2,737	890	3,627	20

The reader will perceive that there had been a diminution of numbers now for three years past. This is said to have been owing chiefly to the spirit of dissatisfaction which had been spread abroad by the controversy of O'Kelly and his party. Such are the pernicious effects of divisions of this character upon the interests of true religion.

CHAPTER II.

An Account of the General Conference of 1796.

THIS conference assembled in the city of Baltimore, October 20th, 1796, and was composed of one hundred and twenty members. As there were no restrictions upon the powers of the conference at that time, they felt themselves at liberty to review our

entire economy, and to make such alterations and additions to the Discipline as they might consider would best promote the interests of the Church. Up to this time the bishops had a discretionary power to appoint as many annual conferences as they might judge would be most for the convenience of the preachers and people; but this conference fixed their bounds, and determined that their number should be but six, with a proviso that, if the bishop saw proper, they might form an additional one in the province of Maine.

We have already seen that the strength of the itinerating ministry was very much weakened, from year to year, by reason of the numerous locations which took place at the several annual conferences. This originated, in part at least, from the inadequate support which was provided for the preachers and their families, especially in the new settlements. The hardships to which they were exposed in traversing the wilderness, their scanty fare, and the excessive labors they were obliged to perform, brought on many of them premature old age, and in many instances they contracted those diseases which terminated in death. By these means, while some were doomed to linger on in feebleness and poverty, others were called to leave their widows and orphan children, to suffer from the privations brought upon them by the sacrifices of their devoted husbands and parents. With such prospects before them, many, as before stated, were induced to forsake the itinerant field, in the hope of providing more adequately for themselves and families, while it may be presumed that some were actuated more from mercenary motives than merely from a fear of temporal want.

To remedy an evil of such magnitude, and take away, as far as possible, all temptations to forsake the work of spreading the gospel by an itinerant ministry, many of the most devoted friends of the cause had looked with anxious hearts for some suitable means. The subject came up for consideration before this General Conference, and they finally resolved to create a *fund* for the relief of necessitous preachers, their wives, widows, and orphans. This was soon after incorporated by the legislature of Pennsylvania, under the following

"ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

Of the Trustees of the Fund for the Relief and Support of the itinerant, superannuated, and worn-out Ministers and Preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America their Wives and Children, Widows and Orphans.

"ART. 1.—It is provided and declared, that the name, style, and title of this corporation shall be, 'The Trustees of the Fund for the Relief and Support of the itinerant, superannuated, and worn-out Ministers and Preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, (in the United States of America,) their Wives and Children, Widows and Orphans;' and that the said trustees shall consist of John Dickins, Thomas Haskins, Jacob Baker, Henry Manly, Burton Wallace, Josiah Lusby, Hugh Smith, Caleb North, and Cornelius Comegys, and their successors, qualified and appointed as is hereinafter mentioned. And they are hereby vested with full powers for carrying into effect the benevolent and charitable purposes in this instrument mentioned and declared.

"ART. 2.—It is provided and declared, that the said trustees, and their successors, by the name, style, and title

aforesaid, shall be able and capable in law to take, receive, have, hold, possess, and enjoy, all, and all manner of lands, tenements, rents, annuities, franchises, and hereditaments, and any sum or sums of money, and any manner and portion of goods and chattels, given, granted, or devised unto them or their successors, by any person or persons, bodies politic or corporate, agreeable to the intention of the donors respectively, and according to the objects, articles, and conditions, in this instrument mentioned and declared; and by the name, style, and title aforesaid, shall be able and capable in law, to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, in any court or courts, before any judge or judges, justice or justices, in all manner of suits, complaints, pleas, causes, matters, and demands whatsoever, and all and every matter therein to do, in as full and effectual a manner as any other person or persons, bodies politic and corporate, within this commonwealth may or can do.

"ART. 3.—It is provided and declared, that in case of the death, resignation, or expulsion from membership (according to the rules and discipline from time to time adopted by the itinerant ministers and preachers of the said Church, in their General Conference assembled) of any one or more of the members of the said corporation, or their successors, then, and in such case, it shall be the duty of the remaining trustees to nominate double the number of those whose seats may have been vacated as aforesaid, and to make a representation thereof, in writing, to the itinerant ministers and preachers of the said Church in their next General Conference assembled; whose duty it shall be then and there to proceed to choose, and, by a majority of votes, appoint one or more persons (as the case may be) out of the whole number of those nominated by the trustees, as aforesaid, to fill such vacancy or vacancies, in order to keep up the number of *nine* trustees for

ever: and upon every such choice and appointment a certificate shall issue from the said General Conference signed by their president and countersigned by their secretary, and directed to the trustees of the said corporation, containing the name or names of the person or persons so chosen and appointed, which said certificate shall be registered in the books of the said corporation; and the person or persons thus chosen and appointed shall be vested with all the powers and immunities of a member of the said corporation—provided, nevertheless, that no person or persons shall be eligible as a trustee or trustees of the said corporation who has not been a member of the said Church (according to the rules and discipline thereof, as aforesaid) at least five years next preceding his or their election and appointment as aforesaid, and who shall not be at least twenty-five years of age.

"ART. 4.—It is provided and declared, that the said corporation shall meet at least once in every year (for the despatch of their necessary business) at such time and place as a majority of them may judge most convenient and proper: and when so met they shall have power to make such by-laws, rules, and regulations for their government, in the management of their affairs, as a majority of them may judge necessary; and also at every such annual meeting they shall proceed to choose, and by a majority of votes appoint two of their own number to act, the one as president, and the other as secretary, to the said corporation, who may continue them in office from year to year, as a majority of the said corporation may think proper.

"ART. 5.—It is provided and declared, that if, at any time hereafter, a majority of the trustees should deem it expedient, by deed or otherwise, to grant, bargain, sell, convey, or otherwise dispose of any part or parcel of the estate, real or personal, of, and belonging to, the said corporation, or charge or incumber the same, then, and in

such case, it shall be their duty to make a representation thereof in writing to the itinerant ministers and preachers of the said Church, in their next General Conference assembled, who shall then and there judge of the necessity or expediency of such proposed sale; and if two-thirds of the ministers and preachers, assembled as aforesaid, shall consent and agree thereto, a certificate shall issue from the said General Conference, signed by their president and countersigned by their secretary, declaring such approbation and consent, and specifying the kind and amount of the property to be sold or otherwise disposed of; which certificate shall be transmitted to the said trustees, who shall cause the same to be recorded in the books of the said corporation—provided, always, that the moneys arising from such licensed sale shall be vested by the said trustees (as soon as conveniently may be) in such other securities and property as, in the judgment of a majority of them, will be most productive and safe; and provided farther, that the annual interest and income, arising from the money so vested, shall be exclusively applied in the manner and for the uses and purposes in this instrument mentioned and declared.

"ART. 6.—It is provided and declared, that the annual rents, interest, and income of the estate, real and personal, which now does, or at any time hereafter may belong to the said corporation and their successors, shall by them be held subject to the exclusive order and control of the itinerant ministers and preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in their General Conference (from time to time) assembled: and the said ministers and preachers, thus assembled, are hereby vested with full powers to appropriate and point out the mode of applying the same to the objects, under the limitations, and for the uses and purposes herein mentioned and expressly declared.

"ART. 7.—It is provided and declared, that the object and design of the fund hereby intended to be established is expressly for the purposes of relieving the distresses, and supplying the deficiencies of the itinerant and superannuated or worn-out ministers and preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America who *remain in connection with, and continue subject to, the order and control* of, the General Conference; as also for the relief of the wives and children, widows and orphans, of *such* ministers and preachers, and for no other use, intent, or purpose whatever.

"ART. 8.—It is provided and declared, that no sum exceeding sixty-four dollars shall in any one year be appropriated and applied to the use of an itinerant, superannuated, or worn-out *single* minister or preacher; also that no sum exceeding one hundred and twenty-eight dollars, in any one year, shall be applied to the use of an itinerant, superannuated, or worn-out *married* minister or preacher; and that no sum exceeding sixty-four dollars, in any one year, shall be applied to the use of each widow of such ministers and preachers as are herein before mentioned and described; and also that no sum exceeding sixteen dollars shall be applied, in any one year, to the use of each child or orphan, of such ministers and preachers as are herein before particularly mentioned and described.

"ART. 9.—It is provided and declared, that no sum or sums of money, under any pretence whatever, shall be drawn from the fund hereby intended to be established, other than for the uses and purposes, and under the limitations and restrictions, herein before expressly mentioned and declared—provided, nevertheless, that the trustees of the said corporation and their successors shall have power to draw and apply, from time to time, so much money belonging to the said fund as in the judgment of a majority of

them may be wanting to defray all the necessary expenses of conducting the business of the said corporation.

"ART. 10.—It is provided and declared, that it shall be the duty of the trustees to cause regular and fair accounts to be kept (in books to be provided for that purpose) of the funds of the said corporation, as well as it respects the kind and amount of the capital stock, and of the annual interest and income thereof, as of all and every sum or sums of money which shall from time to time be drawn therefrom, for the objects, under the limitations, and for the uses and purposes herein before particularly mentioned and declared. And farther, it shall be the duty of the said trustees and their successors, at every General Conference of the preachers as aforesaid, to prepare and lay before them a statement of the affairs of the said fund, for their inspection and examination; which said statement shall be signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary of the said corporation, certifying that the same is fair and correct."

It was provided, by a resolution of the General Conference, that the objects of this fund should be presented in an address to our brethren and friends, and that they should be invited to fill it up by voluntary contributions, donations, and bequests. This was accordingly done, and some subscribed liberally, while others stood aloof from it, thinking it most advisable to let the funds remain in the hands of the people, to be drawn out as they might be needed. Though the creation of the chartered fund originated from the purest motives, and has been kept up and superintended by some of the most benevolent spirits in the Church, yet it has never been able to pay more than from ninety to one hundred dollars a year to each annual conference; and as this small amount

would not, when divided among the several claimants, give to each but about two dollars a year, it may be questioned whether, by inducing a false dependence in the public mind, this fund has not defeated the objects of its institution, and disappointed the expectations of its benevolent founders and patrons. It has continued, however, in existence, has gradually increased in its resources, and its avails are scrupulously applied according to the provisions of its charter, and hence for the good it has done we have reason to be thankful, and especially to those generous men who have, from time to time, gratuitously superintended its affairs, and impartially distributed its avails.

At this conference, with a view to secure church property permanently to the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church, according to the true intent and meaning of the donors and contributors, with as little expense as possible, the form of a deed of settlement was drawn up and inserted in the Discipline. The provisions of the Discipline, however, in respect to this deed, have been modified from time to time, so as to conform to the usages of law in the several states and territories, merely requiring deeds of trust to be so drawn as to "secure the premises firmly and permanently to the Methodist Episcopal Church," to be held in trust by a board of trustees—elected by the people where the laws of the states respectively so require, or where no such laws exist, they are to be appointed by the preacher in charge, or by the presiding elder of the district—for the use of the members of said church in the place where the property is located. See Dis., part ii, sec. 2.

As many have affirmed that all church property is owned by the annual conferences, it may be proper to remark, that they have no legal claim to the property, nor have they sought, nor do they seek, any other control over it than to be permitted "to preach and expound God's word" in the churches, and to administer the discipline and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As to the property itself, it is vested in a board of trustees, elected according to the provisions of law, where such law exists, who are held responsible as Methodists to the quarterly meeting conference of their circuit for the manner in which they discharge their trusts; while the conferences claim the right of using the houses of worship, in conformity to the object for which they were erected, for religious and spiritual purposes only, according to the requisitions of the doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It is true, the trustees are not permitted to alienate the property for other purposes than those for which it was procured, nor are they permitted to exclude from the pulpits those ministers who are regularly sent to them according to the regulations of the Church to which they belong. And is not this as it should be? Should not church property be held sacredly for the sole purposes to which it has been devoted, and which were specified in the deed of settlement when it was enfeoffed to the church?

These remarks have been called for by the oft-repeated and oft-refuted slander, that the Methodist bishops and conferences are the legal owners of the houses of worship which are occupied within our bounds. The property belongs to the members of the church worshiping in that place, and they have com-

mitted it to trustees, generally of their own choosing, for safe keeping, that it may be used for the exclusive purpose for which it was procured, namely, to be devoted in perpetuity to the interests of true religion, as now taught, explained, and enforced by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

We have already seen that our economy recognizes a class of laborers denominated *local* preachers, who attend to secular concerns for a livelihood, and preach occasionally without fee or reward, as their dispositions and circumstances will allow. The number of these had become considerably increased in consequence of the numerous locations before noticed, as well by licensing those who were thought to possess gifts and grace for usefulness in the Church. This useful class of men were often called upon to assist the traveling preachers in their work, to fill vacancies occasioned by sickness or death, in addition to their regular appointments on the Sabbath. In consequence of these things, the present General Conference made the following provisions respecting a local preacher:—

1. He must receive a license, after being examined and approved, from the quarterly meeting conference, provided he be recommended by the class to which he belongs.

2. After improving his gifts acceptably for four years, by being suitably recommended to an annual conference, he was to be eligible to the office of a deacon.

3. Whenever a local preacher filled the place of a traveling preacher, if the latter were unable from sickness or other unavoidable means to fill his own

appointments, he was to be allowed a sum in proportion to the allowance of the traveling preacher, to be raised by the circuit; or if the traveling preacher were absent from other causes, his substitute was to be paid out of his allowance.

4. But if the local preacher were distressed in his circumstances, in consequence of his services in the Church, by applying to the quarterly conference, he might receive such relief as they might see proper to afford him, after the allowance of the traveling preachers and their families were paid.

5. A rule was made for the trial of a local preacher before his peers, differing but little from the one now in existence, which, as the regulations respecting them have been modified from time to time, I shall notice more particularly in another place. Before this rule was passed, local preachers had been tried before the society to which they belonged, the same as if they were but private members. Since this period, however, they have been amenable either to those of their own grade in the ministry or to the quarterly meeting conference.

The following rule respecting the use and sale of spiritous liquors was made, and still continues, unhappily, the standing regulation on this subject:—

"If any member of our society retail or give spiritous liquors, and any thing disorderly be transacted under his roof on this account, the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit shall proceed against him as in the case of other immoralities; and the person accused shall be cleared, suspended, or excluded, according to his conduct, as on other charges of immorality."

By turning to the form of Discipline published in

1789, which is said to be the *fifth* edition, we find the following item in the General Rules:—

"Drunkenness, *buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them.*"

This was an alteration from the rule of Mr. Wesley, as that allowed the use of them in cases of "*extreme necessity*,"—whereas this prohibits *all* use of them, as a *drink*, and even forbids the "*buying or selling*" them under any circumstances. At what time or by whose influence the rule was so altered as to read as it now stands in the Discipline, I have not been able to ascertain, but presume it must have been some time prior to the year 1796, as it seems the pernicious custom of retailing them had become so offensive at this time as to require a special enactment of the General Conference to check the unhallowed practice; for when people begin to make laws with a view to regulate any particular practice, it is an evidence that the practice itself is, in some sense, sanctioned. It is to be hoped that the time is not far distant when the entire use of spirituous liquors shall be banished from the world, but more especially from the church of God: and that to traffic in them, by either manufacturing, buying or selling them, shall be considered as dishonorable, as it is now to become inebriated by their excessive use.

In consequence of the extension of the work, the frequent interruptions in the health of Bishop Asbury, and the long absence of Dr. Coke from the continent every year, it was considered expedient by many members to elect and consecrate some person as an assistant bishop. After consulting each other in reference to the manner in which the person should be elected, Dr. Coke

put an end to the discussion by offering himself unreservedly to the American Methodists. This offer was accepted by the conference, and Dr. Coke gave them the following certificate in writing:—

"I offer myself to my American brethren entirely to their service, all I am and have, with my talents and labors in every respect, without any mental reservation whatever, to labor among them and to assist Bishop Asbury; not to station the preachers at any time when he is present; but to exercise all the episcopal duties, when I hold a conference in his absence, and by his consent, and to visit the West Indies and France, when there is an opening and I can be spared. Signed, THOMAS COKE."

"*Conference Room, Baltimore, Oct.* 27, 1796."

This instrument was given and accepted in good faith, and the obligation was sacredly fulfilled on the part of Dr. Coke, until he was honorably released from it by his American brethren. In pursuance of this engagement, Dr. Coke continued on the American continent as the "friend and colleague" of Bishop Asbury, laboring with great acceptance and usefulness among the people in different parts of the country, until the 6th of February, when he took his departure from Charleston, South Carolina, for Europe. Having a very tempestuous passage, the ship suffered severely, and though they arrived in the Irish channel in twenty-five days, they were there becalmed nearly sixteen days, during which time the following curious incident occurred, which shows the superstition to which seamen, otherwise intelligent, are often subjected.

During the calm Dr. Coke improved his time in

reading a large folio volume. "At length," says his biographer, "being impelled more violently by a tide of superstition, than his vessel was by natural breezes, the captain exclaimed in unequivocal terms, 'We shall never have a wind until that book is finished.' 'Sir, I will put it aside,' replied Dr. Coke. 'No,' rejoined the captain, 'that will not do; it must be finished, or we shall have no wind.' Dr. Coke continued reading, and 'I doubt not,' he observes, 'that the captain was somewhat confirmed in his opinion; for just as I had finished the book, the wind sprung up, and in six and thirty hours brought us into the harbor.'"

Having finished the labors of this conference, Bishop Asbury expressing his gladness that the session was over, went to his accustomed work, and the preachers to their respective fields of labor, being "determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

CHAPTER III.

From the close of the General Conference in 1796, to the commencement of the General Conference in 1800.

1797. THERE were six annual conferences held this year, one of which was in Wilbraham, Massachusetts, the seventh that was held in New-England. Three new circuits were returned on the minutes, namely, *Pleasant River*, in Maine; *Sandwich*, and *Martha's Vineyard*, in Massachusetts. This latter circuit included the island by that name belonging to the state of Massachusetts, about twenty-one miles in

length, and was once the scene of missionary labors by some of our Puritan ancestors, who devoted themselves to the conversion of the aborigines of the country. But the fruit of these labors, though they abounded for a season, had long since disappeared; and among the white inhabitants who had taken their place, a few only welcomed the coming of a Methodist preacher; for we find that in 1798 no more than thirteen members of the Church are credited to Martha's Vineyard.

Though Bishop Asbury began the year with his wonted diligence, and set off upon his annual tour of the continent, yet his physical strength was not equal to the task, and he was compelled to yield, though with great reluctance, to the necessity of employing a substitute to preside in the conferences. He, however, in company with Dr. Coke, rode through several of the southern states until the doctor left the continent for Ireland. The following remark shows the intimate and endeared friendship which subsisted between these two servants of God. Speaking of the doctor's departure, he says, "Strangers to the delicacies of Christian friendship know little or nothing of the pain of parting." After spending some time in Charleston, in consequence of his great debility, during which, however, he was busy in setting things in order, preaching when able, and assisting them in building another house of worship, he set off on his western tour. "On my way," he says, "I felt as if I was out of prison. Hail! ye solitary pines! the jessamine, the red-bud, and the dog-wood! How charming in full bloom! the former a most fragrant smell." He succeeded in crossing the Cumberland

Mountains in the state of Tennessee, but such were his bodily afflictions, that, through the advice and persuasions of his friends, he relinquished his intention of visiting the Kentucky conference, and made his way back as he was able to endure the fatigue of traveling, to the city of Baltimore. While in the state of Virginia, he made the following reflections:—

"My fever left me, as I thought, from Monday until Friday night. I am kept cheerful, but very weak. My diet is chiefly tea, potatoes, Indian meal gruel, and chicken broth. My reading is only the Bible. I cannot think much, and write only a few letters. I think of my charge, of the conferences, and the Church, and of my dear parents, who will probably outlive me.* I must be made perfect through sufferings. I rest in rainy weather, and have to ride from eighty to one hundred miles in a week. The way we now go we have sometimes to ride thirty miles to get to a house."—"I have traveled about six hundred miles with an inflammatory fever, and a fixed pain in my breast."

In this state of pain and weakness did this holy man of God pursue his work, through the various sections of our country, for the sole purpose of building up the Redeemer's kingdom. On the tenth of June he arrived in Baltimore, where he had every attention paid to him which Christian love and esteem could devise; and notwithstanding his physical sufferings, he employed his time, so far as his feeble health would allow, in preaching occasionally to the

* In this he was under a mistake, as he lived to pay a merited token of respect to both his parents on occasion of their death.

people, visiting the classes, and in organizing an African Church. By a suitable attention to medical advice, and the nursing care of his affectionate friends, he soon so far recruited as to be able to resume his itinerant labors. Accordingly we find him on his northern course passing through Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, (stopping long enough in the most important places to preach and meet the classes,) to New-York, and thence he went on his way with an intention to meet the conference at Wilbraham in Massachusetts; but his fever increasing, he was obliged to stop at Tuckehoe, at the house of Bishop Sherwood, where he was treated with great kindness. While here he makes the following reflections, which show the feelings of a sensitive heart, struggling under the burdensome cares of a superintendent of the Church, of an obedient and affectionate son, still panting for an enlarged sphere of usefulness in the world :—

"The kindness of this Sherwood family is great; my dear mamma, and Betsy Sherwood, and Jonathan and Bishop also: if I had not been at home here, what additional distress of mind would have attended me! my friends also were welcome to come and see me. Sabbath day, at the widow Sherwood's, I had the pleasure of hearing our brother Matthias make a pointed, profitable, and powerful discourse. It is now eight weeks since I have preached—awfully dumb Sabbaths! I have been most severely tried from various quarters; my fevers, my feet, and Satan, would set in with my gloomy and nervous affections. Sometimes subject to the greatest effeminacy; to distress at the thought of a useless, idle life: but what brought the heavy pang into my heart, and the big tear to roll, that never rises without a cause, was the thought of leaving the

connection without some proper men of their own election, to go in and out before them in my place, and to keep that order which I have been seeking these many years to establish. My aged parents were dear to me in their advanced age and dependent state: like myself, they have spent what they had to spare for many years, nearly forty, in keeping open doors for the gospel and people of God: this burden hath been laid upon them. I am happy that I can now ride a little every clear day for my better health, and can eat and sleep better. I am left too much alone: I cannot sit in my room all day making gloomy reflections on the past, present, and future life. Lord help me! for I am poor and needy; the hand of God hath touched me, and I think Satan *forts* himself in my melancholy, unemployed, unsocial, and inactive hours."

While the bishop was thus providentially hindered from attending the conference in Wilbraham, it was some consolation to him to know that there were those in the Church who could supply his place, without material detriment to the cause. He accordingly wrote to Jesse Lee, requesting him to attend the conference in Wilbraham, which he did, and the conference made choice of him to preside over their deliberations. This duty he discharged to their entire satisfaction, doing all the business of an annual conference except the ordinations. Afterward, at the request of the bishop, and on the recommendation of that conference, Mr. Lee left New-England and accompanied Bishop Asbury, with a view to aid him in his peculiar work, to some of the more southern conferences. After attending the Virginia conference together, the bishop, at the request of the conference, stopped to recruit his strength, now much wasted by

sickness and fatigue, and Mr. Lee went on to attend the more southern conferences.

This year the city of Philadelphia was severely visited by an epidemical disease which hurried into eternity thousands of its citizens, and induced thousands of others to flee for safety into the country. On this account the conference which was to have set in that city was removed to Duck Creek, in the state of Delaware.

The number of locations still continued to embarrass the itinerancy, as not less than forty-three were returned this year "under a location through weakness of body and family concerns." How much more mighty in strength and comely in beauty would have been the Methodist Episcopal Church had she used the proper means to retain in her itinerant service all those men of God! Youth and inexperience were often called in to supply the lack of service occasioned by these premature departures from the regular work.

While the increase, though comparatively small among the members, shows the good effects resulting from a united effort to spread the knowledge of God our Saviour, the decrease in the number of preachers, as will be seen below, evinces a lamentable defect in securing the continued labors of all those who had entered the itinerating ranks.

Two preachers, namely, *John Ragan* and *Albert Van Nostrand*, closed their labors and life this year in peace, and went to their reward in glory.

Numbers in the Church.

Last year and this, in the recapitulation of the

numbers, I find them taken by states; and that the reader may see the relative strength of Methodism in the several states of the Union, I give them as they stand in the minutes for 1797.

	Whites.	Colored.
Province of Maine	616	
New-Hampshire	92	
Massachusetts	905	8
Rhode Island	175	2
Connecticut	1186	15
New-York	4612	238
New-Jersey	2438	127
Pennsylvania	2900	198
Delaware	1461	823
Maryland	6982	5106
Virginia	11046	2490
North Carolina	7251	2071
South Carolina	2693	890
Georgia	1022	148
Tennessee	534	42
Kentucky	1740	57
Canada	792	3
	46,445	12,218
	12,218	
		Preachers.
Total	58,663	262
Last year	56,664	293
Increase	1,999	Dec. 31

It will be seen by the above enumeration, that there were upward of twelve thousand people of color attached to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

These were chiefly in the southern states, and had been gathered principally from the slave population

At an early period of the Methodist ministry in this country, it had turned its attention and directed its efforts toward these people, with a view to bring them to the enjoyment of gospel blessings. The preachers deplored, with the deepest sympathy, their unhappy condition, especially their enslavement to sin and Satan; and while they labored unsuccessfully by all prudent means to effect their disenthralment from their civil bondage, they were amply rewarded for their evangelical efforts to raise them from their moral degradation, by seeing thousands of them happily converted to God. These efforts added much to the labor of the preachers, for such was the condition of the slaves that they were not permitted, on working days, to attend the public administration of the word in company with their masters; and hence the preachers devoted the evenings to their instruction, after the customary labors of the day were closed. And although at first there was much aversion manifested by the masters toward these benevolent efforts to elevate the condition of their slaves, yet witnessing the beneficial effects of the gospel upon their hearts and lives, they gradually yielded their prejudices, and encouraged the preachers in their labors, assisted in providing houses to accommodate them in their worship, and otherwise protected them in their religious privileges. While, therefore, the voice of the preachers was not heard in favor of emancipation from their civil bondage, nor their remonstrances against the evils of slavery heeded, the voice of truth addressed to the understandings and consciences of the slaves

themselves, was often heard with believing and obedient hearts, and made instrumental in their deliverance from the shackles of sin and the bondage of Satan. Those who were thus redeemed were enrolled among the people of God, and were consequently entitled to the privileges of the Church of Christ. In some of the northern cities, houses of worship were erected for their special and separate accommodation, and they were put under the pastoral charge of a white preacher, who was generally assisted by such colored local preachers as may have been raised up among themselves; for many such, from time to time, possessing gifts for edification, were licensed to preach the gospel to their colored brethren, and some of these have been eminently useful. In the more southern states, where the municipal regulations in respect to the slaves are more severe, some portion of the churches where the white population assemble is usually set apart for the blacks. Their behavior has generally been such as to insure the confidence of their masters and the protection of their civil rulers, though they labored under the disabilities incident to a state of servitude.

This year, ten months from the time the former house was consumed by fire, on the 19th of October, the new church in Light-street, in the city of Baltimore, was consecrated to the service of almighty God.

1798. There were seven conferences this year, so arranged that the bishops might begin their labors in the southern states in the winter season, and travel on north in the spring and summer months. One of these conferences was held in Readfield, in the pro-

vince of Maine, for the accommodation of that part of the work.

Chenango, in the western part of New-York, *Vergennes*, in Vermont, and *Providence*, in Rhode Island, were added to the list of circuits. The western section of the state of New-York was, at this time, a new country, just filling up with inhabitants, and was generally destitute of the word and ordinances of Christianity. To supply them with these several young men, full of zeal for the cause of God, were sent into this newly settled country, under the care of the Rev. F. Garrettson, to whom the charge of the Albany district was confided. As early as 1792, Mr. Garrettson had travelled through various parts of this new country, preaching to the people in their log houses, in barns, and often holding his quarterly meetings under the foliage of the trees. Aided as he was by those zealous and indefatigable young preachers who entered this field of labor, he was instrumental in extending the gospel and its attendant blessings into these destitute places; by these means those societies were established, which have continued to flourish and increase to the present time. Along the Mohawk river, as far as Utica, as well as the Chenango and Susquehanna rivers, those pioneers of Methodism penetrated, and laid the foundation for those extensive revivals of religion which have blessed that region of country. We may form some judgment of the good effects of these labors and sacrifices from the fact that there were returned in the minutes for this year, including the Tioga, Wyoming, Saratoga, and Seneca circuits, 892 members of the Church. Had equal zeal been manifested at this early period

in building suitable houses of worship, as the work enlarged with the progress of the settlements, Methodism would have taken a stand here more firmly, and have exerted a much more hallowed and extensive influence over the population. As it was, however, the permanency of the work has been manifested by its steady growth and leavening effects on that flourishing part of the country; and more latterly the defect alluded to has been in a great measure remedied by the zeal and industry of those enlightened men to whom the oversight of the work has been committed.

A gradual extension of the cause was witnessed generally throughout our bounds, and much harmony and peace prevailed among preachers and people.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year,	47,867	12,302	60,169	267
Last year,	46,445	12,218	58,663	262
Increase,	1,422	84	1,506	5

During the prevalence of the yellow fever in the city of Philadelphia this year, many estimable citizens were swept from time to eternity, and among others that eminent preacher of the gospel, *John Dickins*, whose useful services in the Church entitle him to a more special and lengthened notice than what has been given to some others.

He was a native of Great Britain, born and educated in the city of London. At what time he emigrated to this country is not stated; but it appears that in 1774 he was made a partaker of divine grace, and united himself to the Methodist society in Virginia. In 1777 he was admitted into the traveling ministry,

and itinerated extensively through Virginia and North Carolina in the time of the revolutionary war. For some cause he located in 1781, but two years after was readmitted into the conference, and was stationed in the city of New-York, where he labored for several years acceptably and usefully. When the Book Room was established in the city of Philadelphia in 1789, he was appointed to its superintendence, and he managed its concerns with great skill and fidelity until his demise. For this station he was eminently qualified, not only on account of his strict fidelity, his theological attainments, and thorough acquaintance with the economy of Methodism, but also from his literary acquirements. His knowledge of the sciences was considerable, and besides his own language, he was familiar with the Latin and Greek. And, though not brilliant in his conceptions nor splendid as a preacher, he was of sound judgment, a close and conclusive reasoner, a plain, pointed, and successful preacher, always adapting, as nearly as might be, his discourses to the condition and circumstances of his hearers. As an evidence of the soundness of his views as a divine, may be mentioned the fact that the "Short Scriptural Catechism," which has been published for many years at our Book Room, was the production of his pen. And whatever may be said in behalf of others which have been since issued from the press, this is among the most excellent of them all, and should never be superseded by those of less intrinsic merit. It contains in fact a body of divinity in a few words, selected from the Holy Scriptures, arranged in due order, in the very phraseology in "which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

The accuracy and fidelity with which he discharged his duties as an editor, and also as a financier and book-keeper—for in each of these capacities did he serve while superintending the Book Concern in Philadelphia—may be seen and appreciated by an inspection of the books of the establishment, by a recurrence to the manner in which it prospered in his hands, and the typographical correctness with which the books were executed.

In the relations of husband and parent he sustained the purity and dignity of his station, mixing in all his deportment the tenderness of the warmest affection with the attributes essential to maintain his authority as the head of a family. In the relation of a father ever attentive to the best interests of his children, he devoted himself to their education, to training their minds to moral and religious duties, and to restraining them from those vices which corrupt the mind, and lay the foundation for present and future misery.

The state of his mind may be seen by the following extract of a letter which he wrote to Bishop Asbury a short time before his death. The reader will recollect that the yellow fever was then raging in Philadelphia with awful and destructive violence, sweeping into eternity thousands of his fellow-beings, while others, to escape from this devouring plague, were flying into various parts of the country. Notwithstanding these alarming aspects in the heavens and the earth around him, John Dickins remained, as a faithful sentinel, at his post, giving warning to the impenitent, and counsel and consolation to the trembling and dying believer. In the midst of these things, he says to Bishop Asbury,

"*My much-esteemed Friend and Brother:*—I sit down to write as in the jaws of death. Whether Providence may permit me to see your face again in the flesh I know not; but if not, I hope, through abundant mercy, we shall meet in the presence of God. I am truly conscious that I am an unprofitable, *a very unprofitable* servant; but I think my heart condemns me not, and therefore I have confidence in God. Perhaps I might have left the city, as most of my friends and brethren have done; but when I thought of such a thing, my mind recurred to that Providence which has done so much for me, a poor worm, that I was afraid of indulging any distrust. So I commit myself and family into the hands of God, for life or death."

Soon after writing the above, he was seized with the raging epidemic, and on the 27th of September, 1798, he took his departure to a better world, in the fifty-second year of his age. During his sickness, which he contracted while visiting the abodes of wretchedness and administering the consolations of the gospel to the dying, he was saved from those awful agitations of body and mind which are usually the accompaniments of this fatal disease, and with great tranquillity of mind he entered into his Master's joy. From the testimony of his bereaved widow it appears that he said to her, on the first day of his illness,—

"I am very ill; but I intreat you in the most earnest manner, not to be the least discomposed or uneasy. Tell the children, I beg them not to be uneasy, for *divine wisdom cannot err.* Glory be to God! I can rejoice in his will, whether for life or death. I know all is well! Glory be to Jesus! I hang upon thee. Glory be to thee, O, my God! I have made it my constant business, in my feeble

manner, to please thee—and now, O God, thou dost comfort me."

In this happy frame of mind did he meet the last enemy on his first approaches. Then clasping his hands together, he joyfully exclaimed,—

"Glory be to God! Glory! Glory be to God! My soul now enjoys such sweet communion with him, that I would not give it for all the world. Glory be to Jesus! O, glory be to God! I have not felt so much for seven years. Love him! Trust him! Praise him!"

Bishop Asbury bears the following testimony to the character of Mr. Dickins:—"For piety, probity, profitable preaching, holy living, Christian education of his children, secret closet prayer, I doubt whether his superior is to be found either in Europe or America."

James King, and *Michael H. R. Wilson*, also finished their course and entered into their Master's joy.

Twelve were located; and for the first time, four were returned as supernumerary preachers this year. These were, *John Smith*, *Thomas Morrell*, *Enoch Mudge*, and *Henry Willis*.

1799. This year there were only six conferences, the first of which was in Charleston, S. C., January 1, and the last in the city of New-York, June 19, 1799.

As John Dickins, the book steward, had gone to his reward, by the recommendation of the Philadelphia Conference, Bishop Asbury appointed *Ezekiel Cooper*, to superintend the Book Concern, which was still carried on in the city of Philadelphia.

This year was distinguished by several revivals of

religion. In Upper Canada a gracious revival had commenced in 1797, chiefly through the instrumentality of *Calvin Wooster*, whose fervency of spirit led him forth in the work of reformation in a most remarkable manner, and with singular success. In company with *Samuel Coate*, he volunteered his services as a missionary to this distant field of labor, and after enduring almost incredible hardships on their way, for they lodged no less than twenty-one nights in the wilderness, they arrived in safety just in time to attend a quarterly meeting on the Bay of Quinte circuit. After the preaching on Saturday, while the presiding elder, *Darius Dunham*, retired with the official brethren to hold the quarterly meeting conference, brother Wooster remained in the meeting to pray with some who were under awakenings, and others who were groaning for full redemption in the blood of Christ. While uniting with his brethren in this exercise, the power of the Most High seemed to overshadow the congregation, and many were filled with joy unspeakable, and were praising the Lord aloud for what he had done for their souls, while others "with speechless awe, and silent love," were prostrate on the floor. When the presiding elder came into the house, he beheld these things with a mixture of wonder and indignation, believing that "wild-fire" was burning among the people. After gazing for a while with silent astonishment, he kneeled down and began to pray to God to stop the "raging of the wild-fire," as he called it. In the meantime, Calvin Wooster, whose soul was burning with the "fire of the Holy Spirit," kneeled by the side of brother Dunham, and while the latter was earnestly engaged in prayer for God to put

out the wild-fire, Wooster softly whispered out a prayer in the following words, "Lord, bless brother Dunham! Lord, bless brother Dunham!" Thus they continued for some minutes—when, at length, the prayer of brother Wooster prevailed, and Dunham fell prostrate on the floor—and ere he arose received a baptism of that very fire which he had so feelingly deprecated as the effect of a wild imagination. There was now harmony in their prayers, feelings, and views; and this was the commencement of a revival of religion which soon spread through the entire province; for as brother Dunham was the presiding elder, he was instrumental in spreading the sacred flame throughout the district, to the joy and salvation of hundreds of immortal souls.

Calvin Wooster was a man of mighty prayer and faith. Frequently was his voice heard, by the families where he lodged, in the night season, when rising from his bed while others slept, he would pour out the desire of his soul to God, in earnest prayer for the salvation of souls. Such, indeed, was the strength of his faith in God, and the fervency of his spirit, as well as the bold and pointed manner of his appeals to the consciences of his hearers, and particularly to the wicked, that few of these could stand before him—they would either flee from the house, or, smitten with conviction, fall down and cry aloud for mercy—while, in the midst of these exercises, the saints of God were shouting forth his praises.

Nor was he alone in this work. The other preachers caught the flame of divine love, and were carried forward under its sacred impulses in their Master's work. Many instances of the manifestations

of divine power and grace might be narrated, which go to illustrate the authority by which these men of God spoke in his name; one of which I will relate.

At a quarterly meeting in the Bay of Quinte circuit, as the preacher commenced his sermon, a thoughtless man in the front gallery, commenced, in a playful mood, to swear profanely, and otherwise to disturb the congregation. The preacher paid no attention to him until he was in the midst of of his sermon, when, feeling strong in faith and the power of His might, suddenly stopping, he fixed his piercing eye upon the profane man, then stamping with his foot, and pointing his finger at him with great energy, he cried out, "*My God! smite him!*" He instantly fell, as if shot through the heart with a bullet. At this moment such a divine afflatus came down upon the congregation, that sinners were crying to God for mercy in every direction, while the saints of God burst forth in loud praises to his name. Similar instances of God's gracious presence were not uncommon in those days in that country, as they have been related to the writer on the most unquestionable authority. Indeed, this great work may be said to have been, in some sense, the beginning of that great revival of religion which soon after spread through various parts of the United States.

The doctrine more especially urged upon believers was that of *sanctification, or holiness of heart and life,*—a complete surrender of the soul and body, all their powers and affections, to the service of God—and this was pressed upon them as their *present* privilege, depending for its accomplishment *now* on the faithfulness of God, who had promised to do it. It was

this *baptism of the Holy Ghost* which fired and filled the hearts of God's ministers at that time, and which enabled them so to speak that the people *felt* that their words were with "demonstration and power," and they could not well resist the influence of those "thoughts which breathed," and those "words which burned."

Nor were they less assiduous to press upon the unconverted the necessity of immediate and instantaneous conversion, or a present justification by faith in Jesus Christ—warning them in the most faithful and affectionate manner of the imminent danger of delaying one moment to repent of their sins, and surrender their hearts to God. O what awful sensations ran through the assemblies while Calvin Wooster, and others of a like spirit, were denouncing the just judgments of God against impenitent sinners, in such pointed language as made the "ear to tingle," and the heart to palpitate! Nor were they less affected while these men of God portrayed in such lively colors the beauty and amiableness of religion, the ability and willingness of the Lord Jesus Christ to save them, and concluded by urging them, in the most earnest manner, and with the most affectionate and pathetic strain of eloquence, to accept of pardon and salvation without a moment's delay.

We are not to suppose that this work went on without opposition. In that country there was a marked line of distinction "between the righteous and the wicked," there being but few formal professors of religion to interpose between the two classes. And such was the general state of society, that those who did not embrace religion felt themselves at liberty to manifest their hatred to its doctrines by open acts of

hostility, by scurrilous speeches, and in some instances by personal violence. But in the midst of the obloquy and reproach heaped upon the servants of God, they held on their way, boldly proclaiming the sacred truths of the gospel; and, not unfrequently, some of the boldest opposers of the truth no sooner came within its hearing, than they were forced to yield to its authority, when they willingly bowed their necks to the yoke of Jesus Christ. One instance among many others I will relate. A stout opposer of the Methodists, hearing that his wife was in a prayer-meeting, rushed violently into the room, seized his wife, and dragged her to the door, when, attempting to open it, he was himself seized with trembling, his knees failed him, and he fell helpless upon the floor, and was fain to beg an interest in the prayers of those very people whom he had so much despised and persecuted. He rose not until the Lord released him from his sins and made him a partaker of his pardoning mercy. This very man afterward became an itinerant minister, with whom I was personally acquainted, and had the relation of these facts from his own lips.

All, however, were not so fortunate. The Rev. James Coleman, calling to visit a woman under conviction for sin, while talking with her, was assailed by her husband, who struck him on the forehead so violently, that he carried the mark for a considerable time; and then, to add to the enormity of the offence, raised the scandalous report that Mr. Coleman was holding improper discourse with his wife, which, indeed, was believed by many, until the real cause was revealed, namely, the man's hatred to true religion.

This seems a suitable place to notice the introduction of Methodism into the state of Ohio, which was received into the Union in 1802. It is said that the first settlement in Ohio was commenced in the town of Marietta in 1788, by emigrants from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. What is called the "Western Reserve," was chiefly settled by persons from Connecticut, who purchased the lands of that state about eight years after the first settlement was made. Like all the other new territories in our western wilderness, the settlers were at first destitute of the ordinances of religion, though many of those who removed to Ohio carried their Bibles with them, and retained the religious impressions which they had received at home.

It seems that about the year 1796, *Francis M'Cormick*, a local preacher, emigrated from Virginia, first to Kentucky, but not liking his situation, removed to what was then called the North-western Territory, now Ohio, and settled on the Little Miami, near where the town of Milford now stands. Having no associates like-minded with himself, he went to work in the name of the Lord, and was instrumental in forming a class of ten members, including himself and the members of his family. Being encouraged by this success, he began holding meetings wherever he could gain access to the people, and soon succeeded in forming two more classes, one at brother Ramsey's, on the Obannon's Creek, and another at brother Nutt's near Columbia, each consisting of about ten members. In these labors, though much opposed by the thoughtless and some bigoted professors of religion, he enjoyed much of the presence of the Lord,

and often rejoiced over returning prodigals to their Father's house.

Being attached to the itinerant plan of preaching the gospel, Mr. M'Cormick made several attempts to procure a regular preacher, but could not succeed, because there were not preachers enough to supply the circuits already formed and forming in Kentucky and Tennessee, and at the same time to answer his call. At length he was joined in his labors by *Philip Gatch*, who was among the first Methodist preachers raised up in America, for his name appears in the minutes as an *assistant* in 1774, and was stationed at that time on Frederick circuit in Maryland, his native state. He was now a local preacher—having desisted from traveling in 1778—and moving into this new country, became an efficient agent in building up the cause of God. They were soon after joined by some other pious families from various parts of the older states; and in 1799 they were visited by the Rev. *John Kobler*, from the *Hinkstone* circuit, in Kentucky. In company with brother M'Cormick, he traveled up the Little Miami to the Mad river, as far as there were any settlements, and then down the Great Miami river. They met with some opposition from a few bigoted professors of religion, with whom they disagreed on some doctrinal points, but in general the people appeared ripe for the gospel; and thus these visits laid the foundation for that flourishing state of Methodism which has since been witnessed in this thriving part of our country. They were soon after regularly supplied with preaching, and though the inhabitants, from their ignorance of the real character and motives of

the preachers who came among them, seemed at first afraid to receive them into their houses or to hear them preach, yet they gradually succeeded in gaining their attention and confidence, and in bringing many of them from "darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel."

In 1803, *John Collins*, a local preacher from New-Jersey, settled on the east fork of the Little Miami: his labors were greatly blessed among the people, and through his instrumentality several young preachers were raised up for the itinerancy, who became eminently useful. In 1807 brother Collins joined the traveling ministry, and has continued his useful labors to the present time. Through his and the labors of others who united with him in this work, circuits were formed, and societies established in that part of Ohio along the banks of the Great and Little Miami rivers, Mad River, Cesar's Creek, in Urbana and Xenia, Derby and Paint Creeks, so that in 1807 an annual conference was held in Chillicothe, at which time there were in the Ohio district 3883 members, and 17 preachers.

In the Western Reserve, Methodism is about coeval with the earliest settlement of the country. The first society was formed in Deerfield, in 1801, by a few persons who had emigrated from Massachusetts, namely, Lewis Day, Lewis Ely, their families, and a few others. The next year a society was formed, in the town of Hubbard, at George Frazier's, an emigrant from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. In the same year, Henry Shaul, an exhorter, and afterward a local preacher, removed from Georgetown, Pa., having previously traveled nearly forty miles through the woods to visit the

brethren in that place, and settled in the town of Deerfield. About the same time William Veach and Amos Smith, local preachers, settled in Hubbard, and helped to build up the society; and Obed Crosby, a local preacher, established himself in the town of Vernon. These opened the way for the introduction of Methodism in the Western Reserve.

In 1803, *Shadrach Bostwick*, who had been a travelling preacher for several years in the eastern conferences, was stationed as a missionary at Deerfield, which was at that time connected with the Baltimore conference. He was the first regular preacher sent to the Western Reserve, and he succeeded in forming a small circuit among the new settlements, which he traveled by following Indian trails and marked trees, from one little settlement to another, and at the next conference he returned sixteen Church members. For want of roads and bridges, he was compelled to desist from traveling in the winter months. He continued his labors until 1805, when he located, and the few appointments he had secured were connected with the Erie circuit, then under the charge of David Best and Joseph A. Shackleford. In this way the work commenced in this section of the state of Ohio, and it has continued from that day to this gradually and sometimes powerfully to advance, keeping an even pace with the progress of the settlements and the improvements of society.

In many other parts of the country the work of God greatly prospered. The delightful harmony which prevailed among preachers and people, and the efforts which were made to extend the blessings of the gospel into the new settlements, east, west, north, and

south, gave a vigorous impulse to the general cause, and became a means of bringing hundreds into the fold of Christ.

In the month of January of this year, George Clark was sent to St. Mary's, in the state of Georgia. He found the people in general quite destitute of the gospel, and consequently ignorant of its requisitions, some having arrived to maturity without the privilege of ever hearing a sermon or even a prayer. He bestowed his labors chiefly on the people in Glenn and Camden counties, and so unacquainted were they with Divine worship that he found it needful to teach them the very first elements of Christianity, even when they should kneel, and when sit, in time of public worship. His labors, however, were so sanctioned of God, that before the year closed, many of the people became constant hearers of the word, while a number of others were truly converted to God and thoroughly reformed in their lives. The first Methodist society in the town of Augusta, Ga., was formed in the month of December of this year under the labours of Stith Mead. Some time after this they succeeded in building a commodious house of worship, and the society has gradually enlarged its borders from that day to this.

This year, Tobias Gibson volunteered his services as a missionary to Natchez, in the Mississippi Territory. Though this territory was not received into the confederacy as an independent state, until the year 1817, yet the people from several of the older states had emigrated into its bounds, and were forming settlements in various places along the banks of the Mississippi River, the chief of which, at that time,

was the town of Natchez. Like other new settlements, they were generally destitute of religious privileges, and in danger of being carried away in the stream of moral pollution. Tobias Gibson, being released from his regular work, in consequence of ill health, feeling his mind drawn toward the people in that western country, set off to pay them a visit. Though he found them under the influence of different religious creeds, so far as any religious influence was felt, they received him as a messenger of God, and his labors were blessed to the awakening and conversion of souls. The report of his labors and success at the next conference was highly satisfactory, and accordingly, in 1800, his name appears on the minutes for Natchez, with eighty members in the church. He continued in this country until his death in 1804.

Some idea may be formed of the difficulties he had to encounter and the privations he endured, from the fact, that after traveling six hundred miles, much of the way through the wilderness, to Cumberland River, taking his saddle and traveling equipage into a canoe, he paddled himself down the Cumberland into the Ohio River, and thence into the Mississippi, a distance of upward of seven hundred miles more, to the town of Natchez. Four times he traversed the wilderness, a distance of six hundred miles, being conducted by some friendly Indians on his devious way. The burning love of God which impelled him on in this work, filled his mouth with persuasive arguments in behalf of the gospel, and made him instrumental in leading many a wanderer back to his Father's house. When so worn down by his excessive labors and exposures, as to be unable to pursue his work with his

wonted vigor, he came to the conference, and so earnestly plead the cause in behalf of those people, that in 1803 another, Moses Floyd, was sent to his help, and by their patient and indefatigable labors in this newly settled country, they laid a foundation for the erection of that superstructure of Methodism which has since reared itself in those western wilds.

No less than twenty-nine preachers located this year, and ten were returned supernumerary. The following had died:—

John N. Jones and *William Wilkerson*, both of whom were natives of Virginia, the former having traveled eight, and the latter five years. They had been zealous and useful, and died in the Lord.

Hezekiah Calvin Wooster also took his departure to another world this year. We have already seen something of his character in the notice we have taken of the work of God in Upper Canada. His name is "like ointment poured forth," to many in that country, and he used to be spoken of as an extraordinary messenger of God, sent to declare his counsels unto a fallen and rebellious world. After exerting all his powers of body and mind in beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God, he returned home with the fatal consumption fastened upon his lungs. But even while in this feeble state, so reduced as not to be able to speak above a whisper, this whisper, being announced to the congregation by another, was frequently attended by such a divine energy and unction, that sinners would tremble and fall under the announcement, while the people of God felt the *holy anointing* running through their souls. It is said, indeed, that his very countenance exhibited such

marks of the Divine glory that it struck conviction into the hearts of many who beheld it.

"Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth." Though Hezekiah Calvin Wooster could not be regarded as a man of more than ordinary talents as a preacher, yet, such was the holy fervor of his soul, his deep devotion to God, his burning love for the souls of his fellow-men, that he was the happy instrument of kindling up such a fire in the hearts of the people, wherever he went, particularly in Upper Canada, that all the waters of strife and opposition have not been able to quench it. This testimony I consider due to such departed worth. The grace of God wrought mightily in him, and great was his glorying in the cross of Christ—nor did he glory in aught else—for he was as much distinguished for his humility, his deadness to self, and to self-applause, as he was for the fervor of his spirit, the strength of his faith, and the boldness and pointedness of his appeals to the consciences of the people.

That he enjoyed "perfect love," was demonstrated, not only from the fact of his having recorded the time when he received this great blessing,* but also and more especially from the whole tenor of his life, his constant self-denial, his watchings and fastings, and from the "fruit of the Spirit, love, faith, meekness, patience, gentleness, long-suffering, and charity," which shone out conspicuously in all his de-

* The following was found among his papers after his death :—

"Hezekiah Calvin Wooster was born May 20, 1771.
Convicted of sin October 9, 1791.
Born again December 1, 1791.
Sanctified February 6, 1792."

portment, in the temper of his mind, and the words of his lips.

It could not be expected otherwise than that such a man should be prepared to meet his "last enemy" with firmness, and to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," when drawing near to the termination of his earthly career. Accordingly, when so exhausted as to be scarcely able to speak, on being asked by his father if his confidence was still strong in the Lord, he answered with holy triumph, "Yes, strong! strong!" And a short time before his eyes were closed in death, he said, "The nearer I draw to eternity, the brighter heaven shines upon me." He thus "fell asleep in Jesus" on the 6th of November, 1798, in the 28th year of his age and the fifth year of his ministry. Though his race was short, it was brilliant—its brilliancy arising not so much from the splendor of his talents as from the purity of his motives, the fidelity of his private and public life, and the holy and burning zeal with which he pursued his vocation until sickness and death put a stop to his activity. And when he sunk under the cloud of death, he left such a trail of light behind him, as shall, it is humbly hoped, never be extinguished. Such honor God puts upon those who honor him.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year,	49,115	12,236	61,351	272
Last year,	47,867	12,302	60,169	267
Increase,	1,248	Dec. 66	In. 1,182	5

CHAPTER IV.

An Account of the General Conference of 1800.

1800. As the oldest manuscript journal of a General Conference I have been able to find is the one for this year, I have been guided thus far from printed documents only, and from such facts as I have been able to collect from living witnesses. Hereafter recourse will be also had to the records of the General Conference for such information as relates to the general affairs of the Church, and to the alterations or additions which may have been made from time to time in the rules and regulations of the Discipline.

There were eight annual conferences held this year, the first beginning in Charleston, S. C., January 1, and the last in Lynn, Mass., on the 18th of July. But before we notice the extension of the work in the bounds of the several conferences, and in the new settlements of the western country, we will detail the doings of the General Conference, which was held from the 6th to the 20th day of May, in the city of Baltimore.

By a reference to the journal of Bishop Asbury for the year 1799, it will be perceived that such was his physical debility, originating from excessive labors, the multiplicity of his cares, and his exposures to all sorts of weather, that, though he continued his annual tour of the continent, he was able to preach but seldom, and that it was with much difficulty he discharged his official duties at several annual conferences. In consequence of this general debility he entertained serious thoughts of resigning the superin-

tendency at the ensuing General Conference, and accordingly wrote to several of his most judicious friends in reference to it, giving them information of his intention. So confirmed was he in the intention of resigning his office, and of taking a seat on a level with his brethren in the conference, that he had prepared a letter to that effect, with a design to present it to the conference, fully believing that his bodily health was not adequate to the discharge of the multifarious and important duties of a superintendent. When the conference convened, and the subject of the bishop's resignation was introduced, he informed them that in consequence of bodily infirmities, he had not been able to travel, as heretofore, on horseback, nor to preach as often as usual, and therefore had been obliged to take with him a traveling companion, that the appointments might be regularly filled—and moreover that his labors were frequently interrupted for want of strength to perform them regularly; on which account he did not know that the conference were fully satisfied with the manner in which he had discharged his official trust. After some conversation on these topics, the following questions and answers were unanimously agreed to:—

"*Question.* Whereas, Mr. Asbury has signified his intention of resigning his official station in our Church on account of his weakness of body, what is the sense of the conference on this occasion?

"*Answer*, 1. The General Conference consider themselves under many and great obligations to Mr. Asbury for the many and great services which he has rendered to this connection.

"2. This conference do earnestly entreat Mr. Asbury

for a continuation of his services as one of the general superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church as far as his strength will permit."

This unequivocal expression of confidence and affection so satisfied the bishop of their unabated attachment to him, and of their approbation of his conduct, that he told them in answer, notwithstanding his feelings led him still to decline the arduous duties of his office, yet, as his general health was better than it had been, he was willing to continue his services in any way the conference might think best. This matter being set at rest,

The next question which arose was, whether Dr. Coke, who was present as one of the presidents of the conference, might have liberty to return to Europe in conformity to an earnest request of the British Conference to that effect. This request was founded on the acknowledged right which the American Conference had to the exclusive services of Dr. Coke, in consequence of the solemn pledge he had given them in the year 1796,* and which had been gratefully accepted by the American Conference. And so sacred was this obligation considered by Dr. Coke, and recognised by the British Conference, that he would not consent to a withdrawal of his services from his American brethren without their approbation and consent. When, however, this engagement was first made known to the brethren in Great Britain, they expressed their deep regrets that the doctor had thus deprived them of his valuable services, particularly in the missionary department of their work. Accordingly,

* See Book IV., Chap. III.

when he visited the continent in 1797, he brought with him an earnest and affectionate address from the British Conference to their American brethren, in which they urged the doctor's return to Europe with all practicable speed, as his presence and influence among them seemed necessary to secure their peace and harmony, and more especially for the efficient prosecution of their missionary enterprise, which was then in its infancy. But as the engagement of Dr. Coke was made with the General Conference, which would not again assemble until 1800, no official action could be had in reference to this subject at that time. The address, however, was submitted to the Virginia conference, at which Dr. Coke was present, and the following letter from Bishop Asbury will show the light in which the matter was viewed by them, as well as the high estimation in which Dr. Coke was held by his brethren on both sides of the Atlantic:—

Respected Fathers and Brethren:—You, in your brotherly kindness, were pleased to address a letter to us, your brethren and friends in America, expressing your difficulties and desires concerning our beloved brother Dr. Coke, that he might return to Europe to heal the breach which designing men have been making among you, or prevent its threatened overflow. We have but one grand responsive body, which is our General Conference, and it was in and to this body the doctor entered his obligations to serve his brethren in America. No yearly conference, no official character dare assume to answer for that grand federal body.

"By the advice of the yearly conference now sitting in Virginia, and the respect I bear to you, I write to inform

you that in our own persons and order we consent to his return, and *partial* continuance with you, and earnestly pray that you may have much peace, union, and happiness together. May you find that your divisions end in a greater union, order, and harmony of the body, so that the threatened cloud may blow over, and your divisive party may be of as little consequence to you, as ours is to us.

"With respect to the doctor's returning to us, I leave your enlarged understandings and good sense to judge. You will see the number of souls upon our annual minutes, and as men of reading, you may judge over what a vast continent these societies are scattered. I refer you to a large letter I wrote our beloved brother Bradburn on the subject.

"By a probable guess, we have, perhaps, from 1,000 to 1,200 traveling and local preachers. Local preachers are daily rising up and coming forward with proper recommendations from their respective societies, to receive ordination, besides the regulation and ordinations of the yearly conferences. From Charleston, South Carolina, where the conference was held, to the province of Maine, where another conference is to be held, there is a space of about 1,300 miles; and we have only one worn-out superintendent, who was this day advised by the yearly conference to desist from preaching till next spring, on account of his debilitated state of body. But the situation of our affairs requires that he should travel about five thousand miles a year, through many parts unsettled, and other thinly peopled countries. I have now with me an assistant who does every thing for me he constitutionally can: but the ordaining and stationing the preachers can only be performed by myself in the doctor's absence.

"We have to lament that our superintendency is so weak, and that it cannot constitutionally be strengthened till the ensuing General Conference. How I have felt

and must feel, under such critical and important circumstances, I leave you to judge.

"To write much on the subject would be imposing on my own weakness and your good understanding. I speak as unto wise men; judge what I say.

"Wishing you great peace and spiritual prosperity, I remain your brother, your friend, your servant for Christ's sake, FRANCIS ASBURY."

In conformity with the permission given in this letter for his absence from America for a short season only, after remaining for a while and assisting Bishop Asbury, Dr. Coke returned to Europe, and was usefully employed in visiting the societies in various parts of the United Kingdom, particularly in Ireland during a rebellion which broke out in 1798, in which he was successful in his attempts to shield the Methodist preachers from all blame,—until the session of this General Conference, when he appeared to fulfil his engagements with his American brethren, or be honorably released. After deliberating for some time upon the request of the British Conference for Dr. Coke's return, the following resolution was concurred in:—

"That in compliance with the address of the British Conference, to let Dr. Coke return to Europe, this General Conference consent to his return, upon condition that he come back to America as soon as his business will allow, but certainly by the next General Conference"

In accordance with the spirit of this resolution, the conference addressed their British brethren in the words following:—

"We have considered, with the greatest attention, the

request you have made for the doctor's return to Europe; and after revolving the subject deeply in our minds, and spending part of two days in debating thereon, we still feel an ardent desire for his continuance in America. This arises from the critical state of Bishop Asbury's health, the extension of our work, our affection for, and approbation of the doctor, and his probable usefulness, provided he continue with us. We wish to detain him, as we greatly need his services. But the statement you have laid before us in your address, of the success of the West India missions under his superintendence, the arduous attempt to carry the gospel among the native Irish requiring his influence and support, and the earnest request you have added to this representation; 'believing it to be for the glory of God,' hath turned the scale at present in your favor. We have, therefore, in compliance with your request, *lent* the doctor to you for a season to return to us as soon as he conveniently can, but at farthest by the meeting of our next General Conference.

"Signed by order and in the behalf of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America,

"FRANCIS ASBURY,
"RICHARD WHATCOAT.

Baltimore, May 9, 1800."

Having thus consented to a partial release of Dr. Coke from his engagements, the next important desideratum was how to supply his lack of service. The debilitated state of Bishop Asbury, and the great extension of the work in almost every direction, rendered it next to impossible for him to supply the wants of the Church in its superintendency, or to sustain the interests of the itinerancy in its various departments of labor. After a full consideration of this subject, it

was finally agreed that another bishop should be elected and consecrated at this conference.

Before, however, the conference went into the election, considerable conversation was had respecting the powers of the new bishop, some contending that he should be considered only as an *assistant*, and, in the absence of his *principal*, should have power to station the preachers, only with the advice and concurrence of a committee appointed by an annual conference. The views, however, of those prevailed who thought he should be every way equal in power with his senior in office, both as respected presiding in the conferences, ordaining and stationing the preachers, and the general superintendency of the work.

This point being settled, they proceeded to ballot for a bishop. On the first count there appeared a tie between Richard Whatcoat and Jesse Lee. On the second balloting there were fifty-nine votes for Richard Whatcoat, and fifty-five for Jesse Lee, on which Mr. Whatcoat was declared to be duly elected. Accordingly on the 18th of May he was consecrated as a joint superintendent with Bishop Asbury, by prayer and the imposition of the hands of Bishops Coke and Asbury, assisted by some of the elders.

Mr. Whatcoat was one of the preachers who was ordained a deacon and elder by Mr. Wesley, and accompanied Dr. Coke to America in 1784. He was born in England in the year 1736, and brought up under the influence of a religious education, by which he was saved from those vicious practices to which many youth are addicted. At the age of twenty-two he was made a partaker of the witness, and immediately brought forth the fruits of the Holy

Spirit. In 1769 he entered as a probationer into the itinerant connection of Wesleyan Methodist preachers, then under the superintendence of Mr. Wesley. In this work he continued a faithful laborer, much beloved and respected by the people and confided in by his coadjutors in this work, until he embarked for America, then in the 48th year of his age. He was, of course, one of those who assisted in the organization of our Church at the Christmas conference, and was highly distinguished for the meekness and quietness of his spirit, as well as the prudence of his conduct, and the exemplariness of his deportment. From the time of this conference until his election to the office of a bishop, he had, with the exception of three years, discharged the duties of presiding elder, which, in those days especially, required labors and privations of no ordinary character, as both the districts and circuits were large, the people in general poor, and the calls for preaching numerous, and often far apart. In the fulfilment of his duties in this station, he gave, it is believed, general satisfaction, and acquired the confidence and affection of both preachers and people. Those, indeed, who withheld their votes from him were actuated more from a conviction, it is said, of his lack of those peculiar talents which seemed essential for the office of a bishop, than from any want of confidence in either the depth of his piety, or measure of his prudence; and also from that kindred feeling for his competitor, who had been raised among themselves as an American preacher, and would therefore, as they thought, more familiarly enter into their feelings and views. To both the candidates, the Church had awarded the merit of sharing her confidence and

affection, as having been many years distinguished for their pious zeal and indefatigable labors, as well as for their wisdom and consistency of conduct in council. But the manner in which Richard Whatcoat fulfilled the high trust confided to him, fully justified the wisdom of the conference in selecting him as one of their superintendents; for no man ever furnished more satisfactory evidence of his entire devotion to God, and of his unwavering attachment to the interests of religion, than Bishop Whatcoat did from the time of his consecration to his office till the day of his death. His meekness and modesty, his gravity and dignity of deportment, pointed him out as a fair sample for a primitive bishop, in whose integrity all could confide as a father and a friend, and his subsequent life justified the wisdom of the selection.

Hitherto the allowance of a traveling preacher had been sixty-four dollars a year and his traveling expenses. At this conference it was raised to eighty, and the same for his wife or widow, sixteen dollars a year for each child under seven years of age, and twenty-four dollars for those over seven and under fourteen years. The same provision was made for supernumerary and superannuated preachers, their wives, widows, and orphans; and so it remained until the General Conference of 1816, when the salary of the preachers, their wives and widows, was raised to one hundred dollars a year—the allowance for children remaining the same as heretofore.

In order to meet the increased demands for the support of the ministry, in addition to the class and quarterly collections, and the avails of the Book Concern, the money received for celebrating the rite of

matrimony was to be brought to the conference, together with the income of the Chartered Fund, and what might be raised in public collections on the circuits and at the sessions of the conferences.

Among the rules adopted at the conference of 1784, was one requiring every preacher, when admitted into the traveling ministry, to pay two dollars sixty-seven cents, and by a subsequent rule every member of the conference was to pay two dollars annually. This was to constitute a fund for the support of worn-out preachers, widows, and orphans. At the present conference it was ordered that this money should be appropriated to make up the deficiencies, together with any surplus which might remain in the hands of the stewards, after paying off the allowance of the preachers on the circuits.

On the recommendation of Dr. Coke, who always manifested a lively interest in the welfare of the preachers and their families, those rules were adopted by this conference which recommend to the people to provide for each circuit a parsonage, "furnished at least with heavy furniture," or otherwise to "rent a house for the married preacher and his family, and that the annual conferences assist to make up the rent of such houses, as far as they can, when the circuit cannot do it."

The rule for the trial of accused members was amended at this conference, so that the members before whom the delinquent was brought for trial were to judge of his innocence or guilt, according to the weight of evidence adduced; and also, that if the preacher who sat as judge in the case should dissent from the decision of the committee, he had

the privilege of an appeal to the quarterly meeting conference.

The rule requiring preachers to give an account of private donations from their friends was at this conference rescinded.

In fixing the boundaries of the annual conferences, the number of which were to be seven, the New-England and New-York received their respective bounds as separate and distinct conferences.

Hitherto no special provision had been made for the support of the bishops, they having had their temporal wants supplied by private benefactions, and from particular societies; but at this conference, and it has been a standing regulation ever since, it was ordered that each annual conference should pay its proportion toward their support. And that the annual conferences might feel a measure of responsibility to the General Conference for their acts and doings, they were required by a resolution of this conference to keep and send records of their proceedings to the General Conference that they might be inspected.

It was also resolved that no preacher should hereafter have a seat in the General Conference, unless he had traveled four years, and was in full connection at the time.

The bishops were authorized to ordain those African preachers, in the places where there were houses of worship for their use, who might be chosen by a majority of the male members of the society to which they belonged, and could procure a recommendation from the preacher in charge and his colleagues on the circuit, to the office of local deacons. The rule granting this authority was not incorporated among

the printed regulations of the Discipline, but by a vote of the conference was only to stand on its records. Richard Allen, of Philadelphia, was the first colored man who received orders under this rule Since that time, however, many in different places have been elected and consecrated, and since the General Conference of 1812, when the bishops were authorized to ordain local deacons to the office of elders, after four years' probation as deacons, several have been ordained elders.

After passing these resolutions, and making sundry verbal alterations in the Discipline, not necessary to be particularly noticed, the conference adjourned on the 20th day of May to meet again in the city of Baltimore, on the 6th day of May, 1804.

CHAPTER V.

From the close of the General Conference of 1800, to the end of the year 1803.

HAVING, in the preceding chapter, detailed the doings of the General Conference of 1800, we will return to the annual conferences, and endeavor to give an account of the work of God in the various parts of their extensive fields of labor. This year and the two following were eminently distinguished for the outpouring of the Spirit of God, and the enlargement of his work in various directions. The heavens and the earth, indeed, appeared to be shaken by the mighty power of God, and very many sinners were brought to feel their need of Christ, to seek and to find him as their only Saviour.

It seems that during the session of the General Conference much good had been done by the public and private labors of the preachers; and as they separated with much harmony of feeling, the Spirit of God wrought by their means in many of the places where they were stationed the present year.

During the conference, a work of God commenced in that section of Baltimore called Old Town. Meetings were held here in private houses, which were attended by some of the preachers when not engaged in the business of the conference, by which means several souls were brought to the knowledge of the truth. From this beginning, the work spread in different directions through the city, in the churches as well as in private houses. Such a glorious work had not been seen in Baltimore for several years, and the old professors were much excited and encouraged at beholding their children and neighbors coming into the fold of Christ.

About two weeks after the adjournment of the General Conference, an annual conference was held at Duck Creek Cross Roads, where many of the young converts, and some of the more experienced Christians from Baltimore, came for the purpose of attending the meetings. Here the Lord wrought powerfully. While the members of the conference were transacting their business in a private house, some of the younger traveling and some local preachers were almost constantly engaged in preaching to the people, exhorting and praying with them; and such was the intenseness with which they pursued their work, that at the church, the meeting was held without in-

termission for forty-five hours.* Often, during these meetings, the voice of the preacher was drowned either by the cries of the distressed or the shouts of the redeemed.

As these effects were new to many, they at first looked on with silent astonishment, until, before they were fully aware of it, both saints and sinners would be seized with a shaking and trembling, and finally prostrated helpless upon the floor. The result of these exercises was, that not less than *one hundred and fifty* souls were converted to God during the session of the conference. Such a time of "refreshing from the presence of the Lord" had never before been witnessed in that part of the country.

From this the work spread with great rapidity through the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and into the lower counties of the state of Delaware, bowing, in its course, the hearts of many stubborn sinners, who were brought to God by faith in Jesus Christ. Both preachers and people, in whose hearts the fire of Divine love had been kindled at these meetings, carried the sacred flame with them wherever they went, and thousands have doubtless praised God and are now praising him for the consolations of that blessed revival of godliness. It continued, indeed, to extend its hallowing influence on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and in some other places, through the remainder of the summer.

As the result of this glorious work in the little village of Duck Creek, no less than one hundred and seventeen persons joined the Church.

* Here, then, was a *protracted* meeting held long before those which have been more recently established among us and some other denominations.

Nor was the revival confined to this part of the country. In Philadelphia, in various circuits in the vicinity of Baltimore, in the state of Vermont, in some portions of Canada, Connecticut, and New-Hampshire, the Spirit of the Lord was poured out, and many, very many, sinners were brought to the knowledge of the truth. It seems, indeed, that most of the preachers had received a new baptism of the Holy Spirit—like that which had been showered upon Calvin Wooster, and others in Canada, the preceding year; and wherever they went they carried the holy fire with them, and God wrought wonders by their instrumentality. But the most remarkable work was going on in the western country.

Last year, 1799, was distinguished for the commencement of those great revivals of religion in the western country, which introduced the practice of holding "*camp meetings*." And as these revivals were characterized by signal displays of the power and grace of God, and eventuated in the conversion of thousands of souls, it will naturally be expected that a particular account should be given of their rise and progress.

This work commenced under the united labors of two brothers by the name of *M'Gee*, one a Presbyterian and the other a Methodist preacher. The former, who had preached for some time in North Carolina and in the Holston country, moved into West Tennessee in the year 1796 or 1797, and in 1798 was settled over a congregation in Sumner county. In the year 1798, the latter, *John M'Gee*, moved into West Tennessee, and settled in Smith county. Though belonging to different denominations, those doctrines and usages by

which each was distinguished from the other by no means interrupted the harmony of brotherly love. Hence they cordially united in their meetings, and strengthened each other's hands in the work of the Lord.

In the year 1799 they set off on a tour through what was called the "Barrens," toward the state of Ohio, and on their way they stopped at a settlement on the Red River, to attend a sacramental occasion in the congregation under the pastoral charge of the *Rev. Mr. M'Gready*, a Presbyterian minister. On being introduced to him, Mr. John M'Gee was invited to preach, with which he complied; and he preached with great liberty and power. He was followed by his brother, the Presbyterian minister, and the Rev. Mr. Hoge, whose preaching produced such a powerful effect that tears in abundance attested that the people felt the force of the truths delivered. While Mr. Hoge was preaching, a woman in the congregation was so powerfully wrought upon that she broke through all restraint, and shouted forth the praises of God aloud. Such was the movement among the people, evidently under the impulses of the divine Spirit, that, though Messrs. M'Gready, Hoge, and Rankins, Presbyterian ministers, left the house, the two yokefellows, the M'Gees, continued in their places watching the "movement of the waters." William M'Gee soon felt such a power come over him that he, not seeming to know what he did, left his seat and sat down on the floor, while John sat trembling under a consciousness of the power of God. In the meantime there were great solemnity and weeping all over the house. He was expected to preach, but instead of that he arose and told the people that the overpow-

ering nature of his feelings would not allow of his preaching, but as the Lord was evidently among them, he earnestly exhorted the people to surrender their hearts to him. Sobs and cries bespoke the deep feeling which pervaded the hearts of the people.

This great and unusual work so excited the attention of the people that they came in crowds from the surrounding country, to inquire what these things meant; and this was the beginning of that great revival of religion in the western country which introduced "*camp meetings*." The people came with horses and wagons, bringing provisions and bedding, and others built temporary huts or tents, while all, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, united together in prayer, exhortation, and preaching, exerting all their energies to forward this good work.

The good effects resulting from this meeting, thus casually, or rather providentially convened, induced them to appoint another on Muddy River, and then another on what was called the Ridge. Here a vast concourse of people assembled under the foliage of the trees, and continued their religious exercises day and night. This novel way of worshiping God excited great attention. In the night the grove was illuminated with lighted candles, lamps, or torches. This, together with the stillness of the night, the solemnity which rested on every countenance, the pointed and earnest manner with which the preachers exhorted the people to repentance, prayer, and faith, produced the most awful sensations in the minds of all present. While some were exhorting, others crying for mercy, and some shouting the praises of God in the assembly, numbers were retired in secluded

places in the grove, pouring out the desire of their wounded spirits in earnest prayer. It often happened that these were liberated from their sins, and their hearts filled with joy and gladness while thus engaged in their solitary devotions; and then they would come into the encampment and declare what God had done for their souls. This information, communicated to their brethren in the artless simplicity of "new-born souls," would produce a thrill of joy which could hardly be suppressed: and thus they reciprocated with each other in their sorrows and joys, and excited one another to the exercise of faith in the promises of God, and to perseverance in the good work.

The result of this last meeting was, according to the best estimate which could be made, the conversion of not less than one hundred souls.

A still greater meeting of the same character was held soon after on Desha's Creek, near the Cumberland River. Among the many thousands of people who attended this extraordinary meeting, many, very many, were made partakers of the grace of life. It is said by an eye witness,* who himself largely participated in these solemn exercises, that at these meetings the people fell under the power of the word, "like corn before a storm of wind," and that many who were thus slain, "arose from the dust with divine glory beaming upon their countenances," and then praised God in such strains of heartfelt gratitude as caused the hearts of sinners to tremble within them. But no sooner did this first feeling of ecstasy subside than those young converts began to exhort

* The Rev. John M'Gee, from whom much of this account is taken.

their relatives and neighbors to turn to God and live. And truly it was difficult to resist the power of their words, for they spoke of what they felt, and their words were sharper than a "two-edged sword," piercing the heart, and extorting the cry, "What shall I do to be saved?"

Many of these were children of praying parents, and though uneducated, they spoke with a power and eloquence which "confounded the wisdom of the learned," and extorted the confession from many an unhumbled pharisee, that "God was with them of a truth."

Among others who were brought to the knowledge of the truth at this meeting, was *John Alexander Granade*, who after an exercise of mind for a considerable time bordering on despair, came forth a "burning and shining light," as a public advocate for the cause of Christ. He soon became distinguished among his brethren as the "western poet," and the "Pilgrims' Songs" were among the most popular hymns which were sung at those camp meetings, and perhaps became the fruitful source whence sprung the numerous ditties with which the Church was, for some time, almost deluged. These songs, though they possessed but little of the spirit of poetry, and therefore added nothing to true intellectual taste, served to excite the feelings of devotion, and keep alive that spirit of excitement which characterized the worshipers in those assemblies. Both Granade and *Caleb Jarvis Taylor* contributed much by their energetic labors to fan the flame of piety which had been kindled up in the hearts of the people in that country.

It is not to be supposed that these meetings went

on without opposition. This would be calculating too favorably of human nature in its present state of moral perversity. Not only the openly profane, the non-professor of godliness, but many of those who "had a name to live, but were dead," as well as some whose piety was unquestionable, looked on these meetings and beheld these strange exercises with mingled emotions of pity and abhorrence. The natural enmity of the carnal mind, in the first, mingled with the pride of philosophy of the second, and the prejudices of religious education, alloyed with some portion of religious bigotry in the third, created, altogether, a formidable array of opposition, which showed itself in all the variety of ways which the peculiarity of views and feelings in the above characters might dictate. Some would scoff, others would philosophize, while the latter would dogmatize in no stinted terms of religious intolerance, while they beheld those manifestations of what the friends of the cause justly believed to be the power and grace of God.

But there was one argument which silenced them all. Often those very persons who were most violent in their opposition, most vociferous in their hard speeches against what they denominated "wild fire," would become so warmed by its heat, that their hearts were melted within them, and "falling down on their faces, they would worship God, and report that God was in them of a truth." This argument was irresistible. It was demonstration. And many such were presented during the progress of these meetings. In such cases, those who before had been blasphemers, and mockers, persecutors, and bigoted dogmatizers, were not only struck dumb, but the "tongue

of the dumb was made to sing," and those very opposers of the work became the living witnesses for its divine and genuine character, and stood forth as its bold and fearless defenders.

In the meantime the numbers attending these meetings were continually increased,—some from a sincere desire to be benefited; others were attracted from curiosity, and not a few from motives of speculation, to arm themselves with arguments of resistance to their progress. What tended not a little to give them notoriety, and to excite the public attention toward them, was, the newspapers of the day were teeming with accounts of these camp meetings, some in favor and some against them—and all, whether friends or foes, were eager to gratify their curiosities, or benefit their souls, by becoming eye and ear witnesses of the manner in which they were conducted.

Accordingly, in 1801 the numbers who attended those which were held in Kentucky were immense, some as occasional visitors, and others as residents on the ground through the progress of the meetings. The numbers varied, of course, according to the density or sparsity of the population in their immediate neighborhoods; and they have been estimated from three to twenty thousand. At one held in Cabbin Creek a Presbyterian minister who was present, and zealously engaged in promoting its objects, estimated the number at not less than twenty thousand.

Though at this meeting the Methodists appeared to be the most actively engaged in the work, yet some of the Presbyterian brethren engaged heartily with them, while others stood aloof, not knowing what judgment to form of it. Being, however, encouraged by the

example of others, many of them united with zealous hearts in the cause, and at this great meeting the Methodists and Presbyterians joined their forces to push forward the work, and they seemed to bear down all opposition. The scene is represented as being indescribably awful! An eye witness thus writes concerning it:—

"Few, if any, escaped without being affected. Such as tried to run from it, were frequently struck on the way, or impelled by some alarming signal to return. No circumstance at this meeting appeared more striking than the great numbers that fell on the third night; and to prevent their being trodden under foot by the multitude, they were collected together and laid out in order, or on two squares of the meeting house, till a considerable part of the floor was covered. But the great meeting at *Caneridge* exceeded all. The number that fell at this meeting was reckoned at about three thousand, among whom were several Presbyterian ministers, who, according to their own confession, had hitherto possessed only a speculative knowledge of religion. Here the formal professor, the deist, and the intemperate, met with one common lot, and confessed, with equal candor, that they were destitute of the true knowledge of God, and strangers to the religion of Jesus Christ."

In consequence of such a vast assemblage of people, it was impossible for any one voice to reach the whole of them with intelligible language: hence they were divided into several groups, and addressed by as many different speakers, while the whole grove, at times, became vocal with the praises of God, and at other times pierced with the cries of distressed peni-

tent sinners. As before said, the scene was peculiarly awful at night. The range of the tents—the fires reflecting lights through the branches of the trees—the candles and lamps illuminating the entire encampment—hundreds of immortal beings moving to and fro—some preaching—some praying for mercy, and others praising God from a sense of his pardoning mercy—all these things presented a scene indescribably awful and affecting.

As an instance of the manner in which some of those who attended these meetings from a sportive disposition were arrested and brought to a better state of mind, the following is related :—A gentleman and a lady, of some standing in the gay circles of life, attended the above meeting with a view to divert and amuse themselves at the expense of those whom they considered as deluded with a strange infatuation. With these thoughts they agreed that if one of them should fall the other should not desert him or her. They had not been long on the ground before the woman fell! The merry gentleman, instead of keeping his promise, frightened at the sight of his female friend on the ground, fled with great precipitancy. He did not, however, proceed more than two hundred yards, before he also was prostrate upon the ground, and was soon surrounded by a praying multitude.

In 1801 this work was greatly aided by the energetic labors of the Rev. William M'Kendree (afterward bishop) who was this year appointed to the Kentucky district. Having been in the midst of the revivals in the lower part of the state, and having his soul fired with the sacred flame which was burning with such intensity among the people, he went up into

the centre of the settlements and carried the tidings among them of what God was doing by means of those extraordinary meetings. His congregations, composed chiefly of Methodists and Presbyterians, were powerfully affected when he gave them, at the conclusion of his sermon, an animated account of the commencement and progress of this work. It is said that while he held up before them the truths of the gospel, intermixed with narrations of the work of God at these meetings, his whole soul seemed to be filled with "glory and with God," and that his very countenance beamed with brightness. While he related with artless simplicity, and with glowing warmth, the manner in which God wrought upon the souls of the people, the many happy conversions which had been witnessed, and the astonishing effects which attended the preaching of God's word, the hearts of God's people began to beat in unison with his own, while sinners were weeping in every direction under the melting influence of the Spirit of God.

By this means these same meetings were introduced into the centre of the state, and spread through all the settlements in the western country; and such was the eagerness of the people to attend, that the roads were literally crowded with those that were pressing their way to the groves; so much so that entire neighborhoods would be forsaken, for a season, of their inhabitants. And as the Methodists and Presbyterians were generally united together in these meetings, they took the name of "*General Camp Meetings.*" By these means they spread all through Tennessee, Kentucky, and some parts of Ohio, carrying with them fire and destruction into the enemy's

territories, and bowing the hearts of God's people as the heart of one man to the yoke of Jesus Christ. Of their subsequent progress, and the influence they have exerted on society, I need not here speak, as these things are known to all.

Among the traveling preachers who entered into this work in those days, we may mention William Burke, John Sale, Benjamin Lakin, and Henry Smith, with a number of others, whose zealous efforts contributed greatly to spread the gospel in these new settlements. Mr. M'Kendree was the life and soul of this army of itinerants. Wherever he went, both by precept and example, he aroused the lukewarm to diligence, confirmed those who stood in the faith, and alarmed the fears of careless sinners by his powerful appeals to their consciences. By his means many local preachers who had moved into the country were induced to forsake their secular employments, and enter the ranks of the itinerancy, and they became powerful instruments of extending the revivals through the land. Despising alike the luxuries of life, and the frowns or flatteries of the world, they went forth under the banners of truth, everywhere proclaiming in the ears of the people that they must "fear God and give glory to his name, for the hour of his judgment is come."

It will be seen by the preceding remarks that these camp meetings were not the result of a previously digested plan, but like every other peculiarity of Methodism, were introduced by providential occurrences, and were embraced and followed up by God's servants because they found them subservient to the grand design they had in view, namely, the salvation of the

world by Jesus Christ. Indeed, they did not originate with the Methodists, but upon a sacramental occasion among the Presbyterians, at which time there was such a remarkable outpouring of the Divine Spirit in the people as inclined them to protract their exercises to an unusual period; and then this being noised abroad brought others to the place, and finally so many that no house could hold them; this induced them to go into the field, and erect temporary shelters for themselves, and to bring provision for their sustenance; and finding that God so abundantly blessed them in these meetings, they were led to continue them, until they at length became very general among the Methodists throughout the country.

In order to give a connected view of the rise of camp meetings in the west, I have a little anticipated the regular date of the history, and shall therefore conclude what I have to say on this subject for the present, with a few reflections.

I have simply related the facts in respect to this extraordinary work as I find them recorded in the historical sketches of those times. No doubt many now, as then, will be skeptically inclined in regard to the genuineness of the work. To remove this skepticism from the minds of candid inquirers after truth, (for such only will be convinced,) let it be remarked,

1. That as to the facts themselves, they are indubitable—that is, there can be no room to doubt that such meetings were held as above narrated, and that sinners were prostrated to the earth under the preaching of God's word—that they cried for mercy—were delivered in answer to prayer—and that such, as well as old professors of religion, often shouted aloud the

praises of God—and that many of these, perhaps most of them, afterward led "peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty." These facts are as well at tested as any we have upon the pages of history.

2. It is admitted that in such vast multitudes, assembled in the open air, under circumstances of such peculiar excitement, and many of them not well instructed in science or morals, there must have been some disorder, some mingling of human passions not sanctified by grace, and some words and gesticulations not in accordance with strict religious decorum. Every action, therefore, and every thing which was said and done, I am by no means careful to defend or pledged to justify.

3. When we look into the book of God, we find some instances on record of persons having been affected in a similar way, who were manifestly under the divine influence. Thus Daniel says of himself, that when he saw the vision, "there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength"—and when the Lord had spoken to him he "stood trembling," see Daniel x, 8–11. So Saul of Tarsus, when saluted by the voice from heaven, fell helpless upon the ground, was struck blind, and remained so for three days. And may not the strong cries and tears of those persons who were struck under conviction at those camp meetings, have been produced from a cause similar to that which is recorded in Mark ix, 26, where it is said, "that the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him?"

4. In examining the history of the work of God in his church at different periods, we find similar

instances of mental and bodily exercises on record. Read, for example, President Edwards' account of the revival in New-England, and Mr. Wesley's Journal, particularly from 1739 to 1742, and his correspondence with the Rev. Ralph Erskine of Scotland, in relation to this subject.

In reference to the work in New-England, in the early part of the eighteenth century, we have the following testimony of a convention of Congregational ministers, who assembled in Boston, July 7, 1743, for the express purpose of considering and reporting on the nature of this work. The following is an extract from their report:—

"We never before saw so many brought under soul concern, and with distress making the inquiry, 'What must we do to be saved?' and these persons of all characters and ages. With regard to the suddenness and quick progress of it, many persons and places were surprised with the gracious visit together, or near about the same time; and the heavenly influence diffused itself far and wide, like the light of the morning. Also in respect of the degree of operation, both in a way of terror and in a way of consolation, attended in many with unusual bodily effects. Not that all who were accounted the subjects of the present work have had these extraordinary degrees of previous distress and subsequent joy: but many, and we suppose the greater number have been wrought on in a more gentle and silent way, and without any other appearances than are common and usual at other times, when persons have been awakened to a solemn concern about salvation, and have been thought to have passed out of a state of nature into a state of grace. As to those whose inward concern has occasioned extraordinary outward distresses, the most of them when we

came to converse with them, were able to give what appeared to us a rational account of what so affected their minds, viz., a quick sense of their guilt, misery, and danger; and they would often mention the passages in the sermons they heard, or particular texts of Scripture, which were sent home upon them with such a powerful impression. And as to such whose joys have carried them into transports and ecstasies, they in like manner have accounted for them, from a lively sense of the danger they hoped they were freed from, and the happiness they were now possessed of; such clear views of divine and heavenly things, and particularly of the excellences and loveliness of Jesus Christ, and such sweet tastes of redeeming love as they never had before. The instances were very few in which we had reason to think these affections were produced by visionary or sensible representations, or by any other images than such as the Scripture itself presents unto us.

"And here we think it not amiss, to declare, that in dealing with these persons, we have been careful to inform them, that the nature of conversion does not consist in these passionate feelings; and to warn them not to look upon their state as safe, because they have passed out of deep distress into high joys, unless they experienced a renovation of nature, followed with a change of life, and a course of vital holiness. Nor have we gone into such an opinion of the bodily effects with which this work has been attended in some of its subjects, as to judge them any signs that persons who have been so affected were then under a saving work of the Spirit of God. No: we never so much as called these bodily seizures convictions, or spoke of them as the immediate work of the Holy Spirit. Yet we do not think them inconsistent with a work of God upon the soul at that very time; but judge that those inward impressions which come from the Spirit of God,

those terrors and consolations of which he is the author, may, according to the natural frame and constitution which some persons are of, occasion such bodily effects;—and therefore that those extraordinary outward symptoms are not an argument that the work is delusive, or from the influence and agency of the evil spirit."

This document is said to have been signed by no less than sixty-eight ministers, all of whom concurred in the views therein expressed, while only fifteen refused their assent to an article in the same report which accorded to the practice, at that time a novelty in New-England, of itinerating from place to place to preach the gospel—a practice introduced by Mr. Whitefield, and followed by a few others who had been awakened to activity by his zealous labors.

5. With these facts and examples before us, are we not justified in believing, that persons under the powerful operations of the Spirit of God, either convicting them suddenly and strongly of sin, or filling their souls with his own pure love, may have their animal functions suspended for a season, so that there shall "remain no strength in them?" Is there any thing either unscriptural or incredible in all this?

6. Will it be denied by any believer in divine revelation, or even by a deist, that God can, and often does, so work upon the mind of man, as to make that mind fully conscious of his presence? He who affects to doubt this might as well throw off all disguise at once, and turn an open atheist, and deny that there is any God who presides over the destinies of men, or exercises any control over their understandings and affections.

7. As the mind and body are so intimately con-

nected that the one acts upon the other, is there, after all, any thing so very extraordinary in the supposition that under the strong excitement produced upon the one by the sudden flashes of truth, the other should be equally and suddenly affected in the manner already described? How common are the instances in which persons have been known to swoon away by receiving sudden news either of a joyful or an alarming character? Either great anguish or excessive joy has often been the means of depriving individuals of their physical strength. And what sorrow is equal to that which an awakened sinner feels when he is suddenly brought to see himself as he in reality is, a rebel against his God, and consequently exposed to wrath and hell! And must not the joy of such a person be proportionably great when he finds himself instantaneously delivered from that load of guilt, and filled with a "peace unknown to sensual minds?"

8. It is frequently objected to exercises of this sort, that the passions are chiefly wrought upon. This indeed may be the case in many instances. And I would by no means plead for a religion which does not enter into the judgment, and influence the understanding as well as the affections. But yet, man is a creature of passions as well as of intellect. And as Christianity is not intended to *destroy*, but only to *regulate* the passions, as well as to enlighten the understanding and sanctify the heart, we must expect the passions to be moved, and the emotions of fear, hope, love, and joy to be excited in religious as well as in all other exercises. To these passions Christianity certainly addresses itself, as well as to the judgment, and moves man to action from fear, from hope,

and from the promises of pardon, comfort, and protection, as well as from that eternal reward hereafter, which makes the Christian joyfully anticipate the pleasures of the future life. Those therefore who address themselves to the understanding only, as if men were merely intellectual beings, avail themselves of not one half of the motives with which the gospel furnishes its servants, to induce sinners to repent and believe in Christ, and to encourage believers to persevere in the path of duty.

9. These things being so, is it any matter of wonder that, when the awfully sublime and truly affecting subjects of Christianity are presented to the mind, corresponding effects should be produced upon the pas sions, and that these, when violently agitated with either religious fear or joy, should also affect the body?

10. But we do not place dependence upon these external signs as evidences in themselves of either penitence, conversion, or sanctification. As there may be a fear, a hope, and a love, which is not well founded, so there may be much bodily exercise without any spiritual profit. These things may or may not be. If a person who has had these exercises profess, in the meantime, to have experienced a change of heart, if he bring forth the fruit of righteousness in his subsequent life, we may then safely conclude that the work was effected by the Spirit of God; but if otherwise, if he still manifest the unhumbled spirit of the Pharisee, or bring forth the "works of the flesh," his profession cannot save him from the condemnation of the hypocrite, or the misery of the self-deluded.

These remarks are submitted to the candid reader,

with the hope that they may assist him in making up an unbiased judgment in respect to these things; and although, in the course of our history, we shall be compelled to admit the humiliating fact, that some of the subjects of the above revivals brought forth fruit unto death, yet it will be equally plain that the influence of others on society generally was of a very hallowed character.

Not less than twenty-four preachers were located this year, three withdrew, and four had died in peace. These latter were, *William Early*, *Thomas Haymond*, *Benton Riggin*, and *Robert Benham*. These had all been faithful in their labors, and died in the Lord.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year,	51,442	13,452	64,894	287
Last year,	49,115	12,236	61,351	272
Increase,	2,327	1,216	3,543	15

1801. There were only seven annual conferences held this year, the first commencing in Camden, S. C., January 1, and the last in Lynn, Mass., July 17.

The work of God which had commenced last year under such favorable auspices, and which has been so fully detailed, continued this year, in many places, with increased rapidity and power. Bishop Asbury and his colleague, Bishop Whatcoat, made their annual tour of the continent, not only in visiting and presiding in the conferences, but also preaching to the people in the various cities, towns, and villages, as well as the new and scattered settlements through which they were enabled to pass. The revivals of religion which had been witnessed, the unabated con-

fidence and attachment which had been manifested toward Bishop Asbury by the conference, and the relief afforded him in his arduous labors by the consecration of Mr. Whatcoat as a colleague, seemed to put new life into him, so that he remarks, after attending a conference in Philadelphia, "My health is restored to the astonishment of myself and friends." "Surely," he says in connection with his allusion to the Philadelphia conference, "we may say our pentecost is fully come this year."

Having so fully narrated the progress of the work of God in the western country under date of 1800, it is not necessary to add any thing in respect to it here. In other parts of the country, however, the work went on under somewhat different circumstances, but with equal indications of divine power and goodness. In New-Hampshire and Vermont there were signal displays of the grace of God in the awakening and conversion of souls. One of the preachers writes in the following strain respecting the state of things there:—

"Landaff circuit, in New-Hampshire, is all in a flame. Upward of one hundred have been converted to God; and the work goes on still in a glorious manner. In Chesterfield circuit nearly one hundred have joined our society, and the prospect is now brighter than it has been. In Vershire circuit, in Vermont, there is a good work. More than one hundred have joined society, and the power of the Lord is remarkably displayed; many fall down, being overwhelmed with the power of the Lord. Weathersfield circuit has been gradually gaining ground the whole year, and now the times of refreshing are come from the presence of the Lord. In the town of Athens we had a most melt-

ing time. The power of the Lord was present to heal, and eighty-three joined society on that day, although there was no society there before."

It seems that the revivals in Canada and the western country began to exert an influence in other parts of the work, and lead to a similar method in promoting the cause of God. In the latter part of May of this year, in the town of Dover, Delaware state, a meeting was held for several days, at which time the Lord wrought powerfully upon the hearts of the people, so that on the last day of the meeting one hundred and thirteen persons united with the Church. Many more took their departure to their homes under a deep conviction of their sinfulness, and earnestly groaning for redemption in the blood of Christ.

In the Baltimore district, which included a number of large circuits, it was estimated that upward of a thousand souls were converted to God in the space of a few months. In Annapolis, the metropolis of the state of Maryland, many were brought to the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, and there was great joy in that city.

In Upper Canada, the glorious revival which has been already mentioned had extended along up the shore of Lake Ontario, even to the head of the lake, to Niagara, and thence to Long Point on the northwestern shore of Lake Erie, including four large four weeks' circuits. The district this year was under the charge of the Rev. *Joseph Jewell*, who traveled extensively through the newly settled country, preaching in log houses, in barns, and sometimes in groves, and everywhere beholding the displays of the power and grace of God in the awakening and conversion of

sinners, as well as the sanctification of believers. A great work of God was carried on this year under the preaching of *Joseph Sawyer*, whose faithful labors on the Niagara circuit will be long and gratefully remembered by the people in that country; and it was during this revival that the present writer, after four or five years of hard struggling under a consciousness of his sinfulness, was brought into the fold of Christ; and here he wishes to record his gratitude to God for his distinguished grace, in snatching such a brand from the fire, and to his people for their kindness, and more especially to that servant of God, the Rev. Joseph Sawyer, under whose pastoral oversight he was brought into the Church.

Nor should the labors and privations, the prayers and sufferings in the cause of Christ of that faithful servant of God, the *Rev. James Coleman*, be forgotten. He preceded Mr. Sawyer in the Niagara circuit,* and though not distinguished for shining

* This part of the country was first visited by a local preacher from the United States by the name of *Neel*, who commenced preaching in the vicinity of Queenstown, amid much obloquy and opposition. He was a holy man of God and an able minister of the New Testament. His word was blessed to the awakening and conversion of many souls, and he was always spoken of by the people with great affection and veneration as the pioneer of Methodism in that country. Among those who first joined the society may be mentioned *Christian Warner*, who lived near what is now called *St. David's*, who became a class leader, and his house was a home for the preachers and for preaching for many years. He was considered a father in Israel by all who knew him. The first Methodist meeting house erected in that part of the country was in his neighborhood. This was built in 1801.

Christian Warner has been dead many years; but several of

talents as a preacher, he was beloved by the people of God for his fidelity in the work of the ministry, and for his deep devotion to their spiritual interests, evinced by his faithful attention to the arduous duties of his circuit. He had many seals to his ministry. And the writer of this remembers with gratitude the many prayers which James Coleman offered up to God in his behalf while a youthful stranger in that land, and while seeking, with his eyes but half opened, to find the way of "peace and pleasantness."

The work also prevailed on the Bay of Quintie and Oswegochie circuits, under the labors of *Sylvanus Keeler*, *Seth Crowell*, and others. The latter was a young preacher of great zeal and of the most indefatigable industry; and going into that country he soon caught the flame of Divine love which had been enkindled by the instrumentality of Messrs. Wooster, Coate and Dunham. He entered into the work with great energy and perseverance, and God blessed his labors with much success. So greatly had God prospered the labors of his faithful servants in this province, that there were returned in the minutes of conference for this year 1159 members of the Church. It had, indeed, extended into the lower province, on the Ottawa River, an English settlement about fifty miles west of Montreal. This new circuit was traveled by *John Robinson* and *Caleb Morris*, and they returned forty-five members in the Church.

his descendants are there, some of whom are members of the Church.

Mr. Neel lived to see large and flourishing societies established through all that country, and at length was gathered to his fathers in a good old age.

Like the new settlements in the western country, Upper Canada was at that time but sparsely populated, so that in riding from one appointment to another, the preachers sometimes had to pass through wildernesses from ten to sixty miles' distance, and not unfrequently had either to encamp in the woods or sleep in an Indian hut; and sometimes, in visiting the newly settled places, they have carried provender for their horses over night, when they would tie them to a tree to prevent their straying in the woods; while the preachers themselves had to preach, eat, and lodge in the same room, looking at the curling smoke ascending through an opening in the roof of the log house, which had not yet the convenience of even a chimney.

But in the midst of these labors and privations, they seemed to be abundantly compensated in beholding the blessed effects of their evangelical efforts, and the cordiality and high gratification with which they were received and treated, more especially by those whose hearts God had touched by his Spirit. For though these people were in the wilderness, and many of them poor, they seemed to be ripe for the gospel, and it was no less gratifying to its messengers than it was pleasurable to its recipients to behold its blessed effects upon the hearts and lives of such as "believed with a heart unto righteousness." While those who resisted the truth, often manifested their enmity by persecuting those who proclaimed it, such as did "receive it in the love of it," evinced their affection and gratitude to those who published it, by making them welcome to their habitations, and entertaining them in the very best manner they could. For these self-denying labors, and sacrifices of these early

Methodist preachers, thousands of immortal beings in Canada will doubtless praise God in that day "when he shall come to make up his jewels."

A very serious affair occurred in Charleston, South Carolina, about this time. In 1801 and 1802 the Rev. Messrs. George Dougherty and John Harper were stationed in that city. Hearing that Mr. Harper had received some pamphlets from the north, containing resolutions to memorialize the legislature against slavery, notwithstanding the offensive documents were burned in presence of the mayor of the city, a lawless mob collected to avenge themselves on the person of Mr. Harper. He, however, providentially escaping from their fury, they seized on Mr. Dougherty, dragged him through the street to the pump, and having placed his head under the spout, commenced pumping water upon him, and in all probability they would have suffocated him, had not a pious woman, a Mrs. Kingsley, interfered in his behalf. With an intrepidity worthy of all praise, she resolutely placed herself between the infuriated populace and their intended victim, and stuffed her shawl into the mouth of the spout, and thus stopped the flowing of the water. This heroic act filled the persecutors of Dougherty with astonishment. In silent amazement they paused from their murderous work. At this moment of suspense, a gentleman with a drawn sword stood in the midst of them, and, taking Dougherty by the hand, boldly declared his intention to protect him from their violence at all hazards; and he then led him away, no one daring to interfere. Thus completing the victory which the "weaker sex" had so daringly begun, the man of God, thoroughly wet by the water of the pump,

was rescued from the hand of violence, and restored to his friends in safety—although it is said that his sufferings in this cruel affair laid the foundation of that pulmonary disease with which he afterward died. It is furthermore stated, that of all those concerned in this persecution not one prospered; most of them died miserable deaths, and one of them acknowledged that God's curse lighted upon him for his conduct in this affair.

Thirty-two preachers located this year, three were returned supernumerary, and four, namely, *James Tillotson*, *Abraham Andrews*, *Salathiel Weeks*, and *Charles Burgoon*, after a faithful discharge of their duties as ministers of Christ, had died in the hope of everlasting life.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	57,186	15,688	72,874	307
Last year	51,442	13,452	64,894	278
Increase	5,744	2,236	7,980	29

There was no account rendered of the numbers in Kentucky and Tennessee, where those great revivals of religion had occurred, otherwise the increase would have appeared much larger than it does. As it is, however, it shows the blessed results of those revivals which have been before detailed.

On the 29th day of January of this year, the Rev. *Devereaux Jarratt* departed this life in the 69th year of his age; and though he was never in connection with the Methodists, yet as he favored them in the early period of their ministry, and was greatly instrumental in promoting the work of God in Virginia in those days, it seems proper to give some account

of his character, labors, and death. Mr. Jarratt was born in New-Kent county, in Virginia, on the 6th of January, 1732, O. S. He was awakened to a sense of his lost and guilty condition by the reading of one of Mr. Flavel's sermons, and after a long course of mental discipline, a severe struggling against the innate corruptions of his heart, when about twenty-eight years of age, he was made a partaker of justifying faith in Jesus Christ. In his 30th year he began to prepare for orders in the English Church, and after due preparation he went to England and received consecration on Christmas day, in the year 1762. Before his return he preached several times in London, and such was the zeal with which he spoke in the name of his divine Master, that he even then was called by some a Methodist, an appellation commonly given to those who manifested more than usual zeal in their ministry.

On his return to America, in 1763, he was settled in the parish of Bath, Dinwiddie county, Virginia, and became a zealous and evangelical minister of Jesus Christ, by which means he incurred the dipleasure of the lukewarm clergy of his own Church, as well as of those members who had "the form of godliness, but denied the power thereof."* This, no doubt, led him to seek for spiritual associates elsewhere, and we

* Bishop Asbury, who preached the funeral sermon of Mr. Jarratt, says of him, "He was a faithful and successful preacher. He had witnessed four or five periodical revivals of religion in his parish.—When he began his labors, there was no other, that he knew of, evangelical ministers in all the province of Virginia."—"He traveled into several counties, and there were very few parish churches within fifty miles of his own, in which he had not preached: to which labors of love and

accordingly find him, as we have already seen, receiving and aiding the Methodist preachers when they came into his neighborhood—for which service they in several instances recorded their gratitude.

Mr. Jarratt continued his friendship for his Methodist brethren in general until the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784, when he manifested, if we may believe in the genuineness of the letters attributed to him which were published after his death, no little displeasure at their proceedings, and uttered some hard things against Dr. Coke, Bishop Asbury, and some others.

zeal, was added, preaching the word of life on solitary plantations, and in meeting houses. He was the first who received our despised preachers. When strangers and unfriended, he took them to his house, and had societies formed in his parish. Some of his people became traveling and local preachers among us."—"I verily believe that hundreds were awakened by his labors. They are dispersed—some have gone to the Carolinas, to Georgia, to the western country—some perhaps are in heaven, and some, it may be, in hell." This is a strong testimony in favor of Mr. Jarratt. Little did the writer think when he penned it that a future day would reveal an edition of Mr. Jarratt's posthumous letters, containing such hard censures against the Methodists as are therein found. Indeed these censures are so much unlike the general tone and spirit of Mr. Jarratt, as they were exemplified in his life and conversation, that some, who revere his memory, have expressed doubts of their genuineness, or at least that their editor foisted in expressions which are not in the originals. On the truth of such a conjecture it is scarcely possible to decide; but on reading the letters, there does not appear to me any thing, except the general character of their reputed author, to cause one to suspect their genuineness. Mr. Jarratt doubtless thought he had cause to complain, and under the influence of this impression, he seems to have expressed himself in a strain of invective somewhat unbecoming the character he sustained.

But while he was dissatisfied with the Methodists, on account of their becoming an independent Church, he seemed equally as much so with most of the clergy of his own Church, because of their dereliction from the doctrines of their Church, and their manifest want of a conformity to the formularies of their religion, and especially those parts which enjoined experimental and practical piety. In this frame of mind he laments, in pathetic strains, the low state of religion in his Church, the want of evangelical zeal and enlightened piety in her clergy, and the general deadness to spiritual things throughout the country.

I have made this short record of Mr. Jarratt, 1. Because I think it due to him as an active, zealous, and successful minister of Jesus Christ, whose friendship for the Methodists when they first visited Virginia, and for a considerable time after, greatly aided them in promoting the cause of God. For a number of years he was indefatigable in his gospel labors, and was instrumental in the conversion of many sinners.

2. Because his posthumous letters have been referred to as an evidence of his regret that he had contributed so much to subserve the cause of Methodism. It is, indeed, to be lamented that any thing should have occurred to interrupt, in any degree, that harmony of Christian fellowship which evidently subsisted between him and the Methodists, and which had been for a number of years mutually beneficial, and had, accordingly, been reciprocated with the utmost good will. But on the organization of our Church, Mr. Jarratt found himself between two fires. On the one hand, he could not approve in his judgment of that organization, while his feelings tied him to his old friends;

and in this conflict between his judgment and feelings, the latter became somewhat irritated, and prompted him to say things which, it may be presumed, his more sober judgment would have condemned. On the other hand, while his judgment approved of the doctrine and formularies of devotion recognized in his own Church, he could not fellowship the conduct of her lukewarm clergy and members; and hence, on perceiving this inconsistency between faith and practice, he loudly condemned the one, while he warmly applauded the other. In this dilemma, a situation much to be deprecated by every conscientious minister of Jesus Christ, he seems to have said some things which may justly be regretted by his friends in both communions.

It is not doubted, however, considering his general character, course of conduct, and the predominant tone of his writings, that his last end was "peace and assurance for ever"—and that with Wesley and Fletcher, whom he so much admired, and with those Methodist preachers with whom he once took such sweet counsel, as well as with all those of every name who loved the Lord Jesus Christ, he is now united in ascribing *salvation and honor to Him who loved them and washed them in his own blood.*

1802. This year there were seven annual conferences, and as they remained stationary, as to numbers, for several years, and were generally held for each section of the country about the same time of the year, I will here give the time and place of each, that the reader may see the general route taken by the superintendents every year.

Oct. 1, 1801, the conference for the western

preachers was held in Ebenezer, Tennessee: Jan. 1, 1802, in Camden, South Carolina: March 1, at Salem meeting-house, North Carolina: April 1, in Baltimore, Maryland: May 1, in Philadelphia: June 1, New-York: July 1, in Monmouth, Maine. There were about twenty new circuits added this year, but as circuits were almost continually increased by the addition of new, and the division of old ones, by which their names were changed, it seems inexpedient to particularize them, unless something special shall render it necessary. As an evidence of the good effects of the revivals we have noticed, we may remark that there were sixty-seven preachers admitted on trial, and only ten located.

This good work continued in various parts of the country, particularly in the west, by the instrumentality of camp-meetings, and also in some of the southern states. In Virginia, where the cause of religion had suffered severely on account of the secession and subsequent conduct of O'Kelly and his partisans, the Lord began again to show himself in mercy in the awakening and conversion of souls. At Mabry's and Merrit's chapels, and in Greenville circuit, there were remarkable displays of the power and grace of God, which eventuated in bringing hundreds of sinners into the light of the gospel. Norfolk and Portsmouth shared in the blessed work. In Rockingham an account is given of a meeting which continued not less than nine days, during which time almost all secular business was suspended, so entirely did the concerns of eternity occupy the time and attention of the people. It seems, therefore, that *protracted* meetings, as they have been more recently called, were not unknown in

those days. The chief difference between those and such as have been held within a few past years, consists in this, that the former were introduced without any previous design, but were the result of providential occurrences, while the latter were appointed with the express intention of being continued for several days, and hence, at first, were called "four days' meetings." The result of the one mentioned above was, that one hundred and seven in the immediate neighborhood were brought into the Church, exclusive of those who came from a distance, and were benefited by the meeting.

There was also a great work of God which began last year on Flanders' circuit, in the state of New-Jersey, under the labors of the Rev. *Elijah Woolsey* and his colleagues. Mr. Woolsey had proved himself a bold and hardy veteran in the cause of Christ, by volunteering his services for Upper Canada, in the year 1794, in company with Darius Dunham and James Coleman, where he labored for two years with much patience and industry, and saw the fruit of his efforts in the conversion of souls. In 1801 he was stationed on Flanders' circuit, and after cutting off those corrupt members of the Church who could not be reformed, he finally saw the blessed result of his labors in one of the most manifest displays of the grace of God ever witnessed in that part of the country. This work commenced at a quarterly meeting, at which it was judged there were not less than six thousand persons present. It seems that before the meeting commenced both brother Woolsey and the presiding elder, the *Rev. Solomon Sharp*, had a pre sentiment that the Lord was about to work at this

meeting, and hence they went in the exercise of strong faith in the promises of God that it would be even so. When brother Woolsey arose to address the assembly, feeling "the word of the Lord like fire shut up in his bones," he informed them that God would work among them; and accordingly a shaking and trembling began to be visible in the assembly, accompanied with strong cries to God for mercy. The meeting continued until eleven o'clock at night, and some, indeed, remained all night in these solemn exercises. The work thus commenced spread throughout the circuit, and great was the rejoicing of the people, both among the young converts and the old professors of religion. This revival eventuated in the conversion of many souls, and created a hallowing influence on the surrounding population.

In Alexandria, in the District of Columbia, the quarterly meeting which began on Christmas day, continued sixteen days, and terminated in the conversion of upward of one hundred souls. In the states of North and South Carolina, Maryland, and Delaware, the Spirit of the Lord was poured out among the people in such a manner that some of the meetings were continued day and night, and hundreds became the subjects of the grace of life.

In Vermont, also, the good work was extended in many places, through the labors of God's faithful ministers. *Joseph Mitchell*, *Joseph Crawford*, *Elijah Chichester*, and *Elijah* (now bishop) *Hedding*, had been instrumental, in the three or four preceding years, of carrying the glad tidings of salvation to the inhabitants along the shores of Lake Champlain, both in New-York and Vermont, and had established many

flourishing societies, which have continued gradually increasing until this day. This year *William Anson* was sent to form a circuit on Grand Isle, and such was his success, that there were returned for the next year one hundred and two members of the Church.

Montreal, in Lower Canada, was visited this year by Joseph Sawyer. He found a few persons there who had belonged to the Methodist society in the city of New-York before the revolutionary war, who received him cordially, and assisted him in procuring a school-room for preaching. A *Mr. M'Ginnis* and his sister, both unmarried, were among the first who attached themselves to the society in Montreal, and they remained faithful during all the vicissitudes through which Methodism was called to pass in that city until their death.

The Long Point circuit, in Upper Canada, was formed the latter part of this year, chiefly through the labors of Nathan Bangs, who went into the work under the direction of the presiding elder of the district. In the towns of Burford and Oxford particularly there was a great work of God commenced under his labors, which eventuated in the conversion of about one hundred souls.

In the midst of this great work which was extending over the continent, and blessing thousands with its renovating influences, Bishop Asbury and his faithful colleague, Bishop Whatcoat, were moving among the churches, "as golden candlesticks," reflecting their lustre on all around them, and, by their example, exciting them to activity and diligence in the cause of God. In imitation of the primitive evangelists, these bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church itinerated

through the extent of the work, east, west, north, and south, not neglecting the remotest settlements in the wildernesses. And that they might not interfere with each other, nor both travel over the same ground, we find them in the latter part of last year, after holding a council with some of their brethren, determining to meet the Virginia conference, and from thence accompany each other as far as the New-York conference; after which one was to continue on east to superintend the conferences in that direction, visiting all the eastern and northern states, and on through the western section of New-York state to Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania, and thence through the districts of Virginia, until he met his colleague at the Virginia conference; the bishop who took the western tour was to pass on into the western states and territories, through Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, North and South Carolina, and so meet, as before stated, in the centre of the work in Virginia. What a diocess was this! Each bishop was to have a traveling elder to accompany him.*

According to this wise arrangement they shaped their course thereafter, spreading themselves as far as possible over the entire field of itinerant labor, and, by the aid of their traveling companions, preaching, wherever they came, to the people, and giving a vigorous impulse to the work of God. And as a sample of the manner in which their time was occupied, and the kind of fare they sometimes were obliged to put up with, take the following from Bishop Asbury's Journal :—

* Asbury's Journal, vol. iii, page 43.

"Why," says he, "should a living man complain? But to be three months together upon the frontiers, where generally you have but one room and fire-place, and half a dozen folks about you, strangers perhaps, and their families certainly (and they are not usually small in those plentiful new countries) making a crowd—and this is not all—for here you *may* meditate if you *can*, and here you *must* preach, read, write, pray, sing, talk, eat, drink, and sleep,—or fly into the woods. Well! I have pains in my body"—"which are very afflictive when I ride; but I cheer myself as well as I may with songs in the night."

It certainly may be said of those who "desire the office of a bishop" in connection with laborings and sufferings such as these, if they do not "desire a good thing," they at least desire an office, not for its temporal emolument, nor for the sake of the ease and worldly grandeur it confers. After speaking of his arrival in New-York for this year, he says,—

"We advance toward the completion of four thousand miles for the present year. I have had great exercises on going through rain and continual labor; but have been blessed with great peace by my good and gracious God."

The following account of the conference which he attended in the city of Baltimore, together with his remarks respecting a portion of his journal which was printed during his life-time, is inserted as due to him as a writer, and to the benevolence of his heart as a superintendent of the Church, as they show, on the one hand, that he was not responsible for the errors in his journal, which all who saw lamented, and, on the other, that he rejoiced in the temporal as well as spiritual prosperity of the preachers under his care. He says,—

"Monday, 5. We had a day of fasting and humiliation for the conference, the continent, and the Church of God; I improved the occasion, and spoke from Acts xiv, 23. I was presented with a new impression of my journal; it is very incorrect; had I had an opportunity before it was put to press, I should have altered and expunged many things; the inaccuracies of grammar, and imperfections of composition incident to the hasty notices of a manuscript journal, are preserved in the printed copy. On Monday evening the conference rose: all the demands of the preachers were answered; money was advanced toward the purchase of horses; to those who had distant circuits and far to go, donations were made; and nearly two hundred dollars very liberally sent to the Monmouth conference, which is to meet in July next. Within the circling lines of this conference, we report to this sitting an addition to the society of three thousand souls and upward, besides those who may have died within the last eleven months. John Pawson's letter, and fifty copies of a volume of sermons, came safely to hand; his, and other letters, concerning the work of God, I read to my brethren."

Among other tidings which came to him while at this conference, was that of the death of his pious mother, for whom he always felt a tender and filial regard; and as she belongs, in some sense, to the history of American Methodism, by having given birth to a son who was so closely identified with its interests, I think the reader will be pleased to read the following reflections which the bishop made on receiving the news of her death. The following are his remarks:

"While in Baltimore, I received an account of the death of my mother, which I fear is true. And here I may speak safely concerning my very dear mother: her

character to me is well known. Her paternal descent was Welch; from a family ancient and respectable by the name of Rogers. She lived a woman of the world until the death of her first and only daughter, Sarah Asbury; how would the bereaved mother weep and tell of the beauties and excellences of her lost and lovely child! pondering on the past in the silent suffering of hopeless grief. This afflictive providence graciously terminated in the mother's conversion. When she saw herself a lost and wretched sinner, she sought religious people, but 'in the times of this ignorance' few were 'sound in the faith,' or 'faithful to the grace given:' many were the days she spent chiefly in reading and prayer; at length she found justifying grace and pardoning mercy. So dim was the light of truth around her, from the assurance she found, she was at times inclined to believe in the final perseverance of the saints. For fifty years her hands, her house, her heart, were open to receive the people of God and ministers of Christ; and thus a lamp was lighted up in a dark place called Great Barre, in Great Britain. She was an afflicted, yet most active woman; of quick bodily powers, and masculine understanding; nevertheless, 'so kindly all the elements were mixed in her,' her strong mind quickly felt the subduing influences of that Christian sympathy which 'weeps with those who weep,' and 'rejoices with those who do rejoice.' As a woman and a wife she was chaste, modest, blameless—as a mother (above all the women in the world would I claim her for my own) ardently affectionate; as a 'mother in Israel,' few of her sex have done more by a holy walk to live, and by personal labor to support the gospel, and to wash the saints' feet; as a friend, she was generous, true, and constant. Elizabeth Asbury died January 6th, 1802, aged eighty-seven or eighty-eight years. There is now, after fifty years, a chapel within two or three hundred yards of her dwelling. I am now often

drawn out in thankfulness to God, who hath saved a mother of mine, and, I trust, a father also, who are already in glory, where I hope to meet them both, after time, and cares, and sorrows, shall have ceased with me; and where glory shall not only beam, but open in my soul for ever. Amen."

On account of some difficulties in the Church in the city of Philadelphia, which, it seems, could not be amicably adjusted, a number of the members withdrew from the Church, and established a separate place of worship, in a building which had been erected by Mr. Whitefield for an academy, and in which he used to preach whenever he visited that city. Hence these brethren were distinguished for a number of years as belonging to the *Academy station.*

Believing them to have been influenced by pure motives, and as they adhered to the Methodist doctrine, and wished to be supplied with Methodist preaching, as well as to be governed by our discipline, the question was submitted to the conference, which sat in Philadelphia this year, whether or not the bishop should grant their request to have a preacher stationed over them. After mature deliberation, it was agreed, with only one dissenting vote, that their request should be granted, on such terms as the bishop could make. From that time forward the Academy was considered as a branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and it has been recognized and regularly supplied with preachers by the bishops and conference. And although for some time there was not a perfect union between them and those brethren with whom the difference originated, yet the disaffection gradually wore away, and they both have continued to prosper and

increase in number and respectability to the present day; and it is believed that long since all alienation of feeling between the two sections has fully died away. Indeed, Methodism in the city of Philadelphia has gradually increased in its resources, both temporally and spiritually, from the period of its introduction by Captain Webb, in 1766, until the present time; and although it has had its share of difficulties to contend with, it has never been wanting in putting forth its energies in proportion to its means for the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom, both at home and abroad.

The increase of members for the present year, which may be seen below, shows the blessed effects of the numerous revivals which we have narrated for the two preceding years.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year,	68,075	18,659	86,734	358
Last year,	57,186	15,688	72,874	307
Increase,	10,889	2,971	13,860	51

This is the largest increase in any one year since 1790, when it was 14,369, being 509 more then than now. The friends of the cause had also reason to congratulate themselves on the greater proportionate stability and perseverance of those who had entered the ranks of the itinerancy, there being a much less number than usually heretofore who exchanged the traveling for the local ministry.

1803. There were seven annual conferences this year, the New-England conference being held for the

first time in Boston, and the New-York in Ashgrove, in the northerly part of the state of New-York.

There was an enlargement of the work of God this year in almost every direction, and "many people were added to the Lord." The camp-meetings which had commenced in the west under such favorable auspices, continued to spread with increased usefulness, thousands being attracted by the fame of their character, who otherwise might never have heard the gospel. This year they were introduced into various parts of the country. Two were held in the lower parts of Virginia, the first in Brunswick county, and the second at a place called the *Barn*, at both of which the Lord manifested himself in great power and goodness to the people.

Similar meetings were held in Georgia, South and North Carolina, and in Maryland, at all of which there were remarkable displays of the awakening and converting grace of God, so that it may be said in truth, there were great revivals of religion through all those parts of the country. At a field meeting held in the vicinity of Middletown, Connecticut, there was a gracious work of God commenced, which terminated in the conversion of a number of souls.

This year the work extended in the western part of the state of New-York, and *Otsego*, *Black River*, *Westmoreland*, *Pompey*, and *Ontario* were added to the list of circuits in that part of the country.

Samuel Merwin, Elijah Chichester, and Laban Clark, were this year sent as missionaries to Lower Canada; and Montreal, St. Johns, and Sorel, were included among the stations on the minutes of conference. Mr. Merwin visited Quebec, but not meet-

ing with much encouragement, he staid only about six weeks, when he came to Montreal, and spent the remainder of the year there, while Mr. Chichester, who was in Montreal, returned to the United States. Mr. Clark, after encountering a variety of difficulties in striving to form a circuit in the settlements along the Sorel, was reluctantly compelled to abandon the enterprise as hopeless, and he accordingly left that part of the country, and spent the remainder of the year among his brethren in the United States.

In the great revivals of religion we have noticed, many young preachers were raised up, who went into the world as flaming heralds, contributing much by the energy of their preaching, and the faithfulness of their pastoral duties, to diffuse the spirit of reformation among the people.

But the camp meetings were among the most efficient means of awakening the attention of the people to the things of eternity.

As I have, however, heretofore entered so particularly into the details of the character and good effects of these camp meetings, it seems unnecessary to repeat them here, only to observe in general, that wherever they were introduced, similar effects followed, until at length they became very general among the Methodists throughout the country, and were often seasons of great "refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

Four preachers, namely, *Lewis Hunt*, *Edmund Wayman*, *John Leach*, and *Anthony Turck*, after having fulfilled their ministry with fidelity and usefulness, took their departure this year from a scene of labor to a world of rest, as it is recorded of them all that they

died in peace and triumph. Fourteen located, and six were returned supernumerary.

Until last year the stations of the preachers were printed under their respective districts, as *Georgia*, *South Carolina*, &c., without naming the conferences to which they respectively belonged. In the year 1802 the name of the conference was inserted at the head of the stations, so that it might be perceived at once to what conference each district, circuit, and preacher belonged. This year the same method was observed in taking the numbers, by which means the relative size and strength of each conference might be estimated. The following is the recapitulation of the

Numbers in the Church.

Conferences.	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	
Western	7,738	464	8,202	
S. Carolina	9,256	2,815	12,071	
Virginia	13,099	3,794	16,893	
Baltimore	12,513	6,414	18,927	
Philadelphia	24,626	8,561	33,187	
New-England	2,927	14	2,941	
New-York	11,458	391	11,849	
				Preachers.
This year	81,617	22,453	104,070	383
Last year	68,075	18,659	86,734	350
Increase	13,542	3,794	17,336	33

That we may see the comparative numbers of each conference in proportion to the extent of its territory, it is necessary to know the number of districts, circuits, and preachers of each, as well as the entire population of the territory comprehended in the bounds of each conference; but as the conferences

were not bounded by state lines, it is not possible to estimate the comparative population of each; the following table, however, will exhibit the number of districts, circuits, preachers, and members in the several conferences respectively:—

Conferences.	Districts.	Circuits.	Preachers.	Members.
Western	3	17	27	8,202
South Carolina	3	19	35	12,071
Virginia	4	32	44	16,893
Baltimore	4	34	59	18,927
Philadelphia	6	49	105	33,187
New-England	2	24	35	2,941
New-York	5	38	79	17,336

By comparing the two largest conferences, Philadelphia and New-York, we shall perceive that the former had a population of as one preacher to about three hundred and twenty-five members, and the latter as one preacher to about two hundred and twenty members. This difference may be accounted for in the sparsity of the general population of Vermont and the Canadas, both of which were comprehended in the New-York conference, and although three preachers were stationed in Lower Canada, they were considered as missionaries sent to make a trial for the introduction of Methodism, and from which no members were returned: whereas the Philadelphia conference, though it embraced much of the new counties in the northern part of Pennsylvania and in western New-York, comprehended also the older settled counties along the western bank of the Hudson River, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, in some parts of which Methodism had, from its beginning, flourished more than in any

other portion of our country. The peninsula of Maryland especially was considered the garden spot of Methodism in those days.

If we take the Western and New-England conferences, which are the two least, we shall find that the latter had a population of as one preacher to about one hundred and twenty-two members, and the former as one to four hundred and eighty-two. This difference is easily accounted for. In the western country, the Methodists were the evangelical pioneers among the people, and amid the great revivals which had originated at their camp meetings, they took the lead, and had already reaped a rich harvest of souls as the reward of their labors and sacrifices; while in New-England, though the general population of the country was more dense than in the west, the Methodists had many sorts of opposition to contend with, doctrines adverse to their own to encounter, the prejudices of education, and denominational jealousies to oppose their progress. On these accounts, Methodism made but slow advances in New-England; those who first joined its standard were generally of the poorer class, able to yield but a scanty support to the preachers, and it had, moreover, to contend against a strong current of opposition which set in against it; hence its members were comparatively small for several years. Indeed, it was not until the bands of sectarian bigotry were broken, and the bland influences of the gospel had in some measure softened the asperities arising from denominational peculiarities, that Methodism could stand erect and assert her liberties in New-England.

From a review of the work for the last three years, we find abundant cause for thankfulness to the great

Head of the Church for what he had done by the instrumentality of his servants. Methodism began to be felt throughout the country; and while it provoked the opposition of some, it had been the means of stirring up many other denominations to put forth their efforts for the spread of evangelical principles and holiness through the land; and if "righteousness exalteth a nation," may we not believe that those great revivals of religion had a most happy and conservative influence upon our national character? Had those principles of infidelity with which the minds of many of the leading men of our nation had been infected, and which, at one time, were descending with fearful rapidity to the lower ranks of society, been permitted to operate unchecked by any other barrier than a mere lifeless form of Christianity, or those restraints which a secular and civil education might interpose, is there not reason to apprehend that such streams of moral and intellectual, as well as political pollution, would have poured their poisonous waters over the land, as must have washed our civil and religious institutions into the whirlpool of destruction?

Without attempting to disparage other denominations of Christians, who doubtlessly all contributed toward checking the overflowings of ungodliness by making a firm stand against the secret workings of infidelity, it must, I think, be admitted by all who reflect impartially on the subject, that the labors of the itinerating Methodist preachers tended mightily to purify the corrupt mass of mind, and to awaken attention to spiritual and divine things, and to call off the attention of the people from mere secular and political affairs, to the momentous concerns of eternity.

And may we not hence see a reason why God wrought in such a remarkable manner, about this time, at the camp and other meetings? And why especially that he should have begun this work in the new countries? We know perfectly well, that in the settlement of new countries, being generally destitute of the ordinary means of grace, the minds of the people are apt to be occupied chiefly with temporal things, and thus, by habit, become forgetful of God and their eternal interests. In this state of things, and under such influences as were at work, our new territories were filling and growing up. And who should go after those wanderers? Who should follow them into the wilderness, and bring them into the fold of Christ? Let this duty devolve on whomsoever it might, the Methodists were among the first to discharge it. Their mode of preaching, too, plain, pointed, searching, extemporaneous, and itinerating from place to place, collecting the people in log houses, in school houses, in the groves, or in barns, was most admirably adapted to the state of society, and calculated to arouse the attention of a slumbering world to the concerns of religion.

Such were the means employed, and such were the effects produced. And who will say that God did not lead to the adoption of this method as best adapted to answer the ends of redemption, namely, the salvation of the lost. To awaken the men of that generation from their profound stupor, that they might shake off the slumbers of infidelity, and acknowledge the hand of God in their deliverance from the charms of error with which they were deluded, God, it seems, interposed in the remarkable manner before narrated, and by "signs and wonders" in the symbolical

heavens convinced the people that he "ruled in the armies of heaven, and commanded among the inhabitants of the earth."

By this means, as before said, the minds of the people were awakened to their eternal interests, religion became the topic of conversation, of inquiry, and investigation, and thus that light was poured into the understanding, and conviction into the conscience, which led men to see the errors of infidelity, the unsatisfying nature of a mere form of godliness, and to feel the conservative influence which vital, experimental, and practical Christianity exerts upon individual character, upon social and civil communities, and of course upon states and empires.

What though the keen eye of criticism might detect some errors in doctrine or extravagance in conduct, originating from human weaknesses or unsanctified passions,—shall we cast away the good on account of the bad? Who does not see that such a process would lead to the abandonment of every institution, civil as well as religious, on earth? That thousands of sinners were reformed, in heart and life, the most skeptical must acknowledge. And a thoroughly reformed sinner cannot be otherwise than a good citizen, a good ruler, husband, brother, and friend. To make *Christian* patriots, therefore, is to purify the political atmosphere from all poisonous exhalations, and to make it a healthful medium for the civil respiration of all who move and have their being within its circumference.

In addition to the direct influence which Christian principles were thus brought to exert on the heart and life, the itinerating mode of preaching had a tendency

in the natural order of cause and effect, to cement the hearts of our citizens together in one great brotherhood. It is well known that our civil organization, into several state sovereignties, though under the partial control of the general government, naturally tended to engender state animosities, arising out of local and peculiar usages, laws, customs, and habits of life. What more calculated to soften these asperities, and to allay petty jealousies and animosities, than a Church bound together by one system of doctrines, under the government of the same discipline, accustomed to the same usages, and a ministry possessing a homogeneousness of character, aiming at one and the same end—the salvation of their fellow-men by means of the same gospel, preached and enforced by the same method—and these ministers continually interchanging from north to south, from east to west, everywhere striving to bring all men under the influence of the same "bond of perfectness!" Did not these things tend to bind the great American family together by producing a sameness of character, feelings, and views?

And all this too without entering into the arena of politics at all, or siding, as a Church, with any political party. For it is a well-known fact, that the Methodist Episcopal Church has never embarked on the rough sea of political warfare. She has left all her ministers and members free, to act as individual members of the civil community as they might list, only enjoining upon all a due submission to the "powers that be"—never attempting to dictate to any of her communion to what political party they should lend their influence, nor ever making civil polity the end of

her exertions. The influence therefore, which she has exerted upon the civil destinies of the republic, has been altogether of an indirect and collateral character, growing out of that moral and religious stamp with which she strives to mark and distinguish all her children. That this conservative influence has been felt on the civil destinies of our country, originating from our religious institutions and the mode of carrying them into effect, is what is here contended for, and what, it is believed, all candid, impartial observers of the history of events and the connection between causes and effects must acknowledge.

Being foremost in congratulating the first chief magistrate of our republic on his elevation to that high and responsible office, she has remained unabatedly attached to the constitution of the country, inculcating obedience to its magistrates and laws, and promulgating those doctrines and enforcing those duties which, if believed and discharged, will ensure peace on earth, and lead ultimately to immortality and eternal life in heaven.

CHAPTER VI.

The General Conference of 1804, and of the Annual Conferences of 1804–5–6–7.

THE fourth regular General Conference assembled in the city of Baltimore, on the 7th day of May, 1804. There were present one hundred and twelve members, but as the seats of five were, on examination, declared vacant, because the persons were not legally there, the conference was composed of one hundred and

seven members, namely, four from New-England, three from the Western, five from South Carolina, seventeen from Virginia, twenty-nine from Baltimore, forty one from Philadelphia, and twelve from New-York Conference.*

Bishops Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat were present as presidents of the General Conference.

* This is the first account I find of the names and number from each annual conference. And as it may be satisfactory to some, the names are given, as follows:—

New-England Conference.—George Pickering, Joshua Taylor, Thomas Lyell, Reuben Hubbard.

Western Conference.—William Burke, Thomas Milligan, John Watson, Lowther Taylor.*

South Carolina Conference.—Josiah Randall, George Dougherty, Hanover Dunning, Moses Matthews, James Jenkin.

Virginia Conference.—Jesse Lee, Samuel Risher, Daniel Hall, John Cocks, John Buxton, Humphrey Wood, Joseph Moore, Jesse Coe, Jonathan Jackson, Christopher Mooring, Daniel Ross, Samuel Gerrard, John Gainwell, William Allgood, Alexander M'Caine, Joseph Pennell, Philip Bruce.

Baltimore Conference.—John Potts, Solomon Harris, Henry Willis, Enoch George, Hamilton Jefferson, Thomas Lucas, John Simmons, Jesse Stoneman, William Knox, Lawrence M'Combs, Joshua Wells, John Pitts, Henry Smith, Seely Bunn, Peter B. Davis, David Stevens, James Ward, Samuel Coate, James Quinn, Daniel Hitt, Daniel Fiddler, John West, Nicholas Snethen, William Watters, James Hunter, Lasley Matthews, Thornton Fleming, Nathaniel B. Mills, James Paynter.

Philadelphia Conference.—John M'Clasky, Thomas Sargeant, Thomas Ware, Thomas Smith, Joseph Everett, William M'Lenehen, David Bartine, Richard Swaim, Joseph Totten, Anning Owen, Elijah Woolsey, William Vredenburgh, Robert Dillon, Gamaliel Bailey, Robert Sparks, Joseph Stone, Ezekiel Cooper, Walter Fountain, Benjamin Bidlack, William Colbert, William Mills, Joseph Jewell, Richard Sneath, Johnson Dunham, Edward Larkins, John Crawford, James Smith, Daniel

After being organized, a motion was made and carried, that the conference proceed in the onerous task of reading and revising, in consecutive order, the entire Discipline, requiring, as before, that no old rule should be abolished without the concurrence of two thirds of the members present; but a motion to require a vote of two thirds to establish a new rule was lost. The right of fixing the times for holding the annual conferences was invested in the bishops, provided they should allow each conference to sit at least one week, while the places were to be fixed by the conferences themselves.

The following provision was made in regard to presidents of conferences in the absence of a bishop: "But if there are two or more presiding elders belonging to one conference, the bishop or bishops may, by letter or otherwise, appoint the president; but if

Ryan,* James Herron, Richard Lyon,* Jacob Gruber,* Solomon Sharp, Gideon Knowlton,* William Bishop, Eber Cowles, James Moore, Caleb Kindle, Morris Howe, George Roberts, William P. Chandler, David James.

New-York Conference.—Freeborn Garrettson, Michael Coate, Ralph Williston, John Wilson, Daniel Ostrander, Augustus Jocelyn, Joseph Crawford, Nathan Emery, James Campbell, Aaron Hunt, Abner Wood, Joseph Sawyer.

Of these one hundred and seven who composed that conference, only eighteen are now, (Dec. 20, 1838,) in the itinerancy; G. Pickering, D. Hall, J. Paynter, N. B. Mills, J. Moore, W. Burke, J. Wells, J. Quinn, D. Fiddler, T. Fleming, T. Ware, D. Bartine, E. Woolsey, E. Cooper, John Crawford, J. Gruber, D. Ostrander, and A. Hunt; two have left us, and some others have located; but most of them, together with the three bishops who then presided, are dead; and fourteen of those who belonged to the conferences hold a superannuated relation.

* Those marked thus (*) were not entitled to a seat, by a vote of the conference.

no appointment be made, or the presiding elder appointed do not attend, the conference shall, in either of these cases, elect the president, by ballot, without debate, from among the presiding elders."

To restrict the power of the presiding elders in the employment of preachers whose application to be received into the traveling ministry had been rejected by an annual conference, it was ordered that such should not be employed without the consent of the conference, "under certain conditions."

Provision was also made for the trial of a bishop in the interval of the General Conference, making it obligatory on the accusers to present their accusation in writing, a copy of which must be given to the accused himself. The bishops were, at this conference, prohibited from allowing any preacher to remain more than two years successively in any circuit or station. This has been a standing rule to the present time.

As the articles of religion were adopted under the reign of the "old confederation," the article respecting the government of the United States recognized the "Act of Confederation," as the general bond of union to the several states. At this conference the phraseology of that article was altered so as to recognize the *Constitution of the United States* as the supreme law of the land, and the federal union of the states as a "sovereign and independent nation" which "ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction."

The rule which made expulsion from the Church a penalty for marrying unawakened persons, was so altered at this conference, as to require that such should be put back on trial, with an explanatory note, stating that they did not prohibit persons from uniting

in matrimony with those who are not members of our Church, provided they have the form and are seeking the power of godliness.

The Book Concern, which had hitherto been carried on in the city of Philadelphia, was removed to the city of New-York, and Ezekiel Cooper was reappointed editor and general book steward, and John Wilson his assistant.

A rule was passed recommending to the annual conferences to restrict our preachers from improper publications, making it obligatory on them to submit their manuscripts to the book committee at New-York, or to their annual conference.

It was ordered that each quarterly meeting conference should appoint a secretary to take down its proceedings, in a book to be kept by one of the stewards of the circuit.

It was ordered at this conference that the Discipline should be divided into two parts, the first part to comprehend the *spiritual*, and the second the *temporal* economy; and the spiritual part was directed to be printed separately, more especially for the benefit of the colored members of the Church at the south.

It seems that in the address of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference to our General Conference, they earnestly solicited the return of Dr. Coke, whose labors among them they highly appreciated, more particularly in the missionary department of their work. This subject was referred to a committee to consider and report thereon, and they finally agreed to the following, which was concurred in by the conference:—

"Dr. Coke shall have leave from this General Conference to return to Europe, agreeably to the request of the

European Conferences, provided he shall hold himself subject to the call of three of our annual conferences to return when he is requested, but at farthest, that he shall return, if he lives, to the next General Conference."

In conformity to this resolution, the following letter was addressed to the British Conference :—

"VERY DEAR AND RESPECTED BRETHREN:—Your very kind and affectionate address, from your Manchester Conference, dated August 5, 1803, was presented to us by our mutual friend and brother, Dr. Coke. We always have received, and hope we ever shall receive such addresses from our European brethren, with the most cordial sentiments of Christian friendship; for it is our ardent wish that the European and American Methodists may improve and strengthen the bonds of Christian union, and, as far as possible, reciprocally build each other up in the great and glorious work, in which they are both so arduously employed. And we pray God, that our adorable Jehovah and Redeemer may graciously be pleased to prosper both you and us in the blessed work of proclaiming the honor of our God, and of saving the precious souls of mankind.

"We truly rejoice in the information given us, that the gospel of Christ continues to prevail among you; and that the mission among the native Irish is marked with hopeful and flattering prospects. Also we are much pleased with the account of your prosperous mission in the principality of Wales, in the Welsh language. Whenever we hear of the prosperity of Zion and of the success of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, it gives us a pleasure far superior to our powers of expression: hence we are ready, upon such occasions, with overflowing hearts of love and gratitude, to proclaim with shouts of joy and gladness, 'Not unto us, not unto us; but unto the Lord' be more than human ascriptions of praise, of honor, and glory!

May the united labors of your hands be prospered more and more!

"We also feel peculiar satisfaction at the information of the union and harmony which subsist among you in doctrine and discipline; and that you, our elder brethren, are steadfast and persevering in the divine articles of the essential divinity and efficacious atonement of Jesus Christ, and of all the benefits and privileges flowing from, and connected with the same; we cordially embrace the same important truths, and are determined to stand fast and immovable in the support of this essential foundation of all our hopes.

"The Lord has greatly prospered our labors in these United States. We have at present increased to considerably more than one hundred thousand members; and the work still goes on in a great and glorious manner. Our brethren are much in the spirit of active perseverance in this blessed work; and, by the blessing of God, our hearts are cemented together in love, and are bound in the ties of harmony and unity.

"With respect to our much-esteemed friend, and beloved brother, Dr. Coke, he arrived among us last autumn, and was received by us with the sincerest sentiments of respect and affection. Since he came into these states, he has traveled about three thousand miles, visiting our principal societies, and preaching to crowded assemblies of our citizens. His time, we trust, has been profitably and acceptably spent among us, and we hope agreeably to himself. Your request for his return was taken into our most serious and solemn consideration; and, after a full and deliberate examination of the reasons which you assigned in favor of his return, we have concluded that there is a probability of his being more eminently useful at present, in the way you point out, than for us to retain him, especially as our beloved brother Asbury now enjoys bet-

ter health than he did some years ago, and as we believe, with the assistance he can receive from our esteemed brother Whatcoat, the work of superintending the Church and societies can be accomplished in the absence of Dr Coke. We therefore have consented to the doctor's return to Europe, upon the express condition that he will return to us at any time, when three of our annual conferences shall call him, or at farthest, that he shall return to our next General Conference.

"And now, dear brethren, we commend you to our common Lord, and to the word of his grace, hoping that you and we shall ever remain in the unity of the Spirit, and bonds of Christian and ministerial affection, until we meet together around the throne of God. Pray for us. We are, very dear and much-respected brethren, truly and sincerely yours, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Signed by order, and in behalf of the General Conference,

"FRANCIS ASBURY,
"RICHARD WHATCOAT,
"JOHN WILSON, *Secretary*.

"*Baltimore, May* 23, 1804."

This year, for the first time, I find the boundaries of the several annual conferences fixed by the General Conference, and printed in the form of Discipline. They are as follows:—

1. The New-England conference shall include the district of Maine, the Boston, New-London, and Vermont districts.

2. The New-York conference comprehends the New-York, Pittsfield, Albany, and Upper Canada districts.

3. The Philadelphia conference shall include the remainder of the state of New-York, all New-Jersey, that part of Pennsylvania which lies on the east side

of the Susquehanna River, except what belongs to the Susquehanna district, the state of Delaware, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and all the rest of the Peninsula.

4. The Baltimore conference shall include the remainder of Pennsylvania, the Western Shore of Maryland, the Northern Neck of Virginia, and the Greenbrier district.

5. The Virginia conference shall include all that part of Virginia which lies on the south side of the Rappahannock River and east of the Blue Ridge, and all that part of North Carolina which lies on the north side of Cape Fear River, except Washington, also the circuits which are situate on the branches of the Yadkin.

6. The South Carolina conference shall include the remainder of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

7. The Western conference shall include the states of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio, and that part of Virginia which lies west of the great river Kanawha, with the Illinois and Natchez; provided, the bishops shall have authority to appoint other yearly conferences.

A bare inspection of the map of the United States will show the immense territory included in each of these conferences; and when it is recollected that the districts and circuits were proportionably large, it will be perceived that the preachers of those days were no "idle shepherds," but were emphatically *laborers* in this vast and fruitful field.

These, with the exception of some unimportant verbal amendments, and some regulations in reference

to the Book Concern, which will be noticed in another place, comprehended the doings of this conference. The conference closed its session in peace on the 23d of May, and the members returned to their itinerant labors with renewed ardor, determined to spend and be spent in the cause of Jesus Christ.

It appears from the records of those days, that the introduction of camp meetings added a new stimulus to the work of reformation, and put, as it were, new life and energy into the hearts of God's ministers and people. They were accordingly appointed in almost every part of our work, and were generally attended with most evident manifestations of the power and grace of God. It was estimated that about one thousand souls were brought from darkness to light, this year, at the various camp meetings which were held in the states of North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New-York, besides those who were indirectly benefited by these meetings on their various circuits; for generally, the preachers and people returned from the camp meetings with their hearts fired and filled with the love of God, and were a means of carrying the sacred flame into their respective neighborhoods, where it was enkindled with fresh ardor, and burned with a steady blaze, consuming the sins of many a broken-hearted sinner.

But while these extraordinary meetings were exerting a hallowed influence upon the older states, and were therefore hailed particularly by the Methodists as instruments of great good to the souls of the people, those in Kentucky ran into such wild excesses in some instances, as to bring them into disrepute in

the estimation of the more sober part of the community.

We have seen that some of the Presbyterian ministers were among the foremost in promoting these meetings, and in favoring the revivals which resulted from them. These, however, were opposed by many of their brethren, particularly those who held fast the doctrines of Calvinistic decrees, and blended with them the doctrine of irresistible grace, thereby aiding, indirectly, and without intending it, the fatalism of infidelity, with which the minds of many of the Kentuckians had been infected. Some of these ministers, in the judgment of those who have recorded the transactions of those days, were strangers to experimental religion, and therefore, when they undertook to instruct those awakened sinners who came to them for advice, they knew not how to meet their cases, nor how to adapt their instructions to the peculiar state of their minds. This created perplexity and confusion. Those whose souls were alive to God, by having received a baptism from above, were disgusted with the awkwardness of those spiritual advisers, and finally considered them "physicians of no value." This led to disputings, and finally to a separation, which terminated in 1803 in the formation of what was called the "Springfield Presbytery." But these preachers, however sincere and fervent they might have been, did not surround themselves with those guards which are essential to the preservation of harmony, orthodoxy, and gospel order; and hence those who were licensed to preach by this presbytery, puffed up with their sudden elevation to office, and breathing in an atmosphere which inflated them with spiritual pride,

threw off the restraints of a wholesome discipline, and soon proclaimed those destructive heresies which are subversive of all true religion. The Springfield Presbytery was dissolved in 1804, and some turned Shakers, and others ran into the wildest freaks of fanaticism. Hence originated those unseemly exercises so humiliating to recount, of jumping, dancing, jerking, barking, and rolling on the ground, by which these schismatics were at last distinguished and disgraced. And to finish the climax of absurdities, in the midst of this "confusion worse confounded," a company of Shaking Quaker preachers from the state of New-York came among them with their new-fangled doctrines, and "drew away disciples" after them. Several of these dissentient ministers and quite a number of members were, by these means, drawn into this vortex of error and confusion.

Another thing which added to the evils so much to be deprecated by every friend to gospel order, was the introduction, by some men of eminent talents, and considerable influence, of the Socinian and Arian heresies. These, indeed, were the precursors, in some measure, of the evils we have mentioned, and tended, by their soft and subtle speculations, gradually to sap the foundation of the Christian's hope, and to prepare the way for that wild confusion by which many minds became bewildered. These things, as before stated, tended to bring camp meetings into disrepute in Kentucky, and not a little to strengthen the cause of skepticism—an infidelity to which many were strongly inclined, and which always battens itself upon the foibles and faults of religious professors—a sort of

food exactly suited to the vitiated and voracious appetite of an unbelieving multitude.

But while these things were transacting among those who slid off from the mountain of gospel truth, the Methodists generally, and most of the Presbyterians who had favored these revivals, descried the danger from afar, and gave the alarm to their people. The latter, however, separated themselves from both the old Presbyterians, who were supposed to be defective in experimental religion, and too tenacious of the peculiarities of Calvinism, and from those wild fanatics we have already described, and established a community of their own under the jurisdiction of what has been called "The Cumberland Presbytery."* These have continued to increase in numbers and respectability to the present time, and no doubt have exerted a salutary religious influence within the sphere of their labors.

The Methodists, however, adhered to their standards, and promoted the cause of the revivals without involving themselves in the responsibility of those wild rhapsodies and unseemly gesticulations which hung on the skirts of the camp and other meetings in Kentucky. The union which had subsisted between the different denominations became, from various causes, weaker and weaker, until finally each, arranging itself under its own standard, and using those religious appliances which were considered

* This presbytery, which was not established until 1810, abjured the offensive features of Calvinism, adopted the Arminian doctrine of general redemption, the universality of the atonement of Jesus Christ, and dispensed with a liberal education as a necessary prerequisite of a gospel minister.

lawful and expedient, endeavored to promote the cause of piety in its own peculiar way, without improperly interfering with its neighbor. And although, from the causes we have enumerated, camp meetings became unsavory in most places in Kentucky, their birth-place, they traveled into the new state of Ohio, and there displayed the banners of the cross with all that vigor and success which had marked their progress in Kentucky and Tennessee, and also without suffering a deterioration from the wild excesses heretofore deprecated. What added to the beneficial influence of these meetings in Ohio, and tended to diffuse the spirit of reformation among the people in these new settlements, was, that many who had caught the sacred flame in Kentucky, from 1803 to 1806, as if impelled by an invisible power, emigrated to Ohio; and while the Church was being sifted in Kentucky, and under the searching operation of a gospel discipline, much of the chaff was winnowed out, these pious emigrants were preparing a habitation for themselves and their children in a more congenial soil, better suited, from various circumstances, for the cultivation and growth of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

This year William Burke was the presiding elder of the Ohio district, and he contributed much by his labors and sacrifices to extend the Redeemer's kingdom in that newly-settled country. While William M'Kendree continued his labors in Kentucky, and exerted all his powers to check the progress of fanaticism which he saw afflicting the Church, as well as to confirm the wavering and the doubting, Mr. Burke, aided by several young men of zeal and perseverance, was carrying the spiritual warfare into the enemy's

territories in Ohio, and thus was preparing the way of the Lord in that rising part of our country.

This year a strong effort was made to introduce Methodism into the town of Marietta. In many places in the adjoining settlements it had taken firm hold of the hearts of the people, and several flourishing circuits had been formed; but as yet no impression had been made upon the inhabitants in Marietta, the oldest town in the state, and in which the Congregationalists held the religious sway. This year a camp meeting was appointed by the Rev. George Askins, on the public land in the immediate vicinity of the village; but though it was rendered a blessing to the people of God who assembled from a distance, no permanent impression appeared to be made on those for whom it was chiefly intended, and the meeting broke up with little hopes in the hearts of the preachers. They all agreed, however, to pray for an outpouring of the Spirit upon that place. The next year, under the superintendence of the Rev. Messrs. Jacob Young and George C. Light, another meeting was appointed, which was attended with the most blessed results; and among others who were made partakers of the grace of life was a professed disciple of Thomas Paine, by the name of *Jonas Johnson*. The change wrought in him was great and visible; and, being a most charming singer, by the exercise of his gift and his general deportment, he exerted great influence over others, and was instrumental of much good. He committed his infidel books to the flames, substituting in their place the Bible and Hymn book, and other religious books, and opened his house as well as his heart to the messengers of salvation. A class was

soon formed of happy believers, which continued to flourish and increase in strength and numbers, and to exert a hallowed influence for many years on the surrounding population; and the church in Marietta, though at times suffering from the disaffection of some of its members, stands among her sister churches in Ohio as one of the stars to enlighten the minds of those who "sit in the land and shadow of death."

While these things were going on in the western states the Lord was not unmindful of other parts of his vineyard. As has already been related, by means of camp meetings, which may be considered as ushering in a new era in the history of revivals of religion, the work of God spread rapidly in many parts of the older states. In addition to the general notice already taken of those, we may remark that this year there was an encouraging revival in the city of Philadelphia; not less than one hundred souls had been converted to God, and brought into the fold of Christ, under the labors of Joshua Wells and his colleagues.

In Bedford, Amherst, and Campbell counties in Virginia, and some other places, under the labors of Stith Mead, the Lord poured out his Spirit, and more than eleven hundred souls were brought into gospel liberty in about six months.

In the province of Maine there was a gracious work of God in several places. This began at the conference which was held in the town of Buxton, upward of forty souls having been born unto God during the conference. In Bethel and Readfield the work of God prevailed to a considerable extent. In Mississippi there was a number brought to the knowledge of the truth.

This year Benjamin Young was sent as a missionary to Illinois, which at that time contained but few inhabitants, and these chiefly descendants of the French, who first settled in Kaskaskia and Cahokia, in 1720. But though thus early explored by the French, and settlements commenced, the progress of the population in Illinois was extremely slow, as it is said that in 1800 the whole number of inhabitants was only two hundred and fifteen, and the territory was not erected into an independent state until 1818. Since that time, however, it has filled up with inhabitants with a surprising rapidity. The missionary so far succeeded in his labors that there were returned, on the minutes for the next year, sixty-seven members.

This year, also, Nathan Bangs solicited and obtained the appointment of a missionary to a new settlement on the River Thames,* in Upper Canada. This place had long been on his mind as a promising field for missionary labor, and he had frequently offered himself to explore it in the name of the Lord, but his presiding elder objected, on account of the feeble state of his health and the unhealthiness of the climate.†

While at the conference in New-York this year, he

* This place was, through mistake, printed on the minutes, La French.

† Perhaps no part of our country is more subject to fever and ague, or "lake fever," as it was called, than that along the banks of the River Thames, occasioned by the stagnant swamps which are formed a little distance from the river on each side, and the unwholesomeness of the water which the people were obliged to use. The missionary arrived there in the month of August, and in the month of September the fever began to rage; and during its progress, in almost every family less or more

made known his desires and impressions to Bishop Asbury, and he appointed him a missionary to that place. He accordingly left the city of New-York in the latter part of the month of June, went into Upper Canada by the way of Kingston, thence up the country along the north-western shore of Lake Ontario to the Long Point circuit, and thence on through Oxford to the town of Delaware, on the River Thames. Here he lodged for the night in the last log hut in the settlement, and the next morning, as the day began to dawn, he arose and took his departure, and after traveling through a wilderness of forty-five miles, guided only by marked trees, he arrived at a solitary log house about sunset, weary, hungry, and thirsty, where he was entertained with the best the house could afford, which was some Indian pudding and milk for supper, and a bundle of straw for his bed. The next day, about twelve o'clock, he arrived at an Indian

were sick, and in some instances every member of a family was prostrated at the same time, though it seldom proved mortal.

When the missionary first visited their houses, he was generally presented with a bottle of whisky, and urged to partake of it as a preservative against the fever; but he declined the beverage, and told them they might, if they chose, drink their whisky, and he would drink water and tea, and see who would have the better health; and when the fever commenced its ravages, as above described, so that he could visit scarcely a house without seeing more or less sick, he constantly traveled the country in health, until about the close of the sickly season, when he too was seized with the prevailing disease, but by timely remedies he escaped with only three paroxysms. This is mentioned chiefly to show the mistaken notion under which many people labor, who suppose that the use of ardent spirits is a preventive against any epidemical disease. It is believed that it induces it in nine cases out of ten, instead of preventing it.

village on the north bank of the River Thames, the inhabitants of which were under the instructions of two Moravian missionaries. While there the Indians were called together for worship, which was performed in a very simple manner, by reading a short discourse, and singing a few verses of a hymn. The missionaries and the Indians treated him with great respect and affection, and seemed to rejoice in the prospect of having the gospel preached to the white settlements on the banks of the river below.

About 3 o'clock, P. M., he arrived at the first house in the settlement, when the following conversation took place between the missionary and a man whom he saw in the yard before the house. After the introductory salutation, the missionary inquired, "Do you want the gospel preached here?" After some deliberation, it was answered, "Yes, that we do. Do you preach the gospel?" "That is my occupation." "Alight from your horse, then, and come in, will you?" "I have come a great distance to preach the gospel to the people here, and it is now Saturday afternoon, to-morrow is the Sabbath, and I must have a house to preach in before I get off from my horse." After a few moments of consideration, he replied, "I have a house for you to preach in, provender for your horse, and food and lodging for yourself; and you shall be welcome to them all if you will dismount and come in." Thanking him for his kind offer, the missionary dismounted and entered the hospitable mansion in the name of the Lord, saying, *Peace be to this house.* A young man mounted his horse and rode ten miles down the river, inviting the people to attend meeting at that house the next morning at ten o'clock, A. M.

At the time appointed the house was filled. When the missionary rose up, he told the people that whenever a stranger makes his appearance in a place the people are generally anxious to know who he is, whence he came, where he is going, and what his errand is among them. "In these things," said he, "I will satisfy you in few words." He then gave them a short account of his birth and education, of his conversion and call to the ministry, and the motives which induced him to come among them, and concluded in the following manner: "I am a Methodist preacher, and my manner of worship is to stand up and sing, and kneel in prayer; then I stand up and take a text and preach, while the people sit on their seats. As many of you as see fit to join me in this method, you can do so; but if not, you can choose your own method." When he gave out his hymn, they all arose, every man, woman, and child. When he kneeled in prayer, they all, without exception, kneeled down. They then took their seats, and he stood up and gave out his text, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" and he preached, as he thinks, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Having concluded his discourse, he explained to his audience his manner of preaching, by itinerating through the country, his doctrine, and how supported, &c. He then said, "All you who wish to hear any more such preaching, rise up"—when every man, woman, and child stood up. He then told them they might expect preaching there again in two weeks.

Such a commencement, in a strange place, he con-

sidered as a token for good. He then sent on appointments through the settlements along down the river, which he filled in a manner similar to the above, and was everywhere received with great cordiality. He proceeded down the shore of Lake St. Clair, visited Sandwich, on the Canada side of the outlet of the lake, crossed over to Detroit,* and preached in the council-house, thence to Fort Malden, and down the shore of Lake Erie, in a settlement made up of Americans, English, Scotch, Irish, and Dutch emigrants. The people everywhere flocked together to hear the word.

A more destitute place he had never found. Young people had arrived to the age of sixteen who had never heard a gospel sermon, and he found a Methodist family who had lived in that country for seven years without hearing a sermon preached. But although the people generally were extremely ignorant of spi-

* Detroit, at that time, seemed to be a most abandoned place. On his second visit, the missionary was introduced to a Congregational minister, who told him that he had preached in Detroit until none but a few children would come to hear; and, said he, if you can succeed, which I very much doubt, I shall rejoice. On the third visit, which was on Sabbath, sure enough, only a few children came to the place of worship, and no one appearing to take any interest in hearing the gospel preached there, our missionary shook off the dust of his feet as a testimony against them, and took his departure from them. In about four weeks after this, the town was consumed by fire. The report was that it took fire from a man smoking a segar in a stable, and the houses being chiefly built with wood, the flames spread so rapidly that nearly every house on each side of the main street was consumed.

It was, however, soon rebuilt, and has since greatly flourished, and now we have a large and influential church in that place.

ritual things, and very loose in their morals, they seemed ripe for the gospel, and hence received and treated God's messenger with great attention and kindness. He continued among them about three months, when he left them for the Niagara circuit, intending to return again soon, but was prevented. He was succeeded the next year by William Case, who was instrumental of great good to the souls of the people. Societies and a regular circuit were formed, which have continued to flourish and increase to the present time.

Forty-eight preachers located this year,* two were expelled, and four, namely, *William Ormond, Nathan Jarrett, Rezin Cash,* and *David Brown,* had died; having fulfilled their ministry with fidelity, they ended their lives and labors in peace.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year,	89,603	23,531	113,134	400
Last year,	81,617	22,453	104,070	383
Increase,	7,986	1,078	9,064	17

1805. There were seven annual conferences held this year; and the minutes were so arranged that the stations of the preachers, as well as the questions and answers, were printed under their respective conferences, so that it might be seen, at one view, what was the relative strength of each section of the work.

* Among these was the Rev. *Thomas Lyell,* who soon after joined the Protestant Episcopal Church, and succeeded the Rev. Joseph Pillmoor, in the city of New-York. He is still living, and has maintained a reputable standing in that Church, and, retains, it is believed, his affection for his Methodist brethren.

Nothing out of the ordinary course of things occurred this year. The work of God went gradually on, and much good was accomplished by means of the ministry of the word in various parts of the country. The camp meetings spread more and more in the middle and northern states, and they were generally attended with increasing interest; many, from the novelty of their character being induced to attend, who might otherwise never have heard the sound of the gospel; and not a few of these were brought to serious and solemn thought.

This year, for the first time, a camp meeting was held on the Bay of Quintie circuit in Upper Canada, which was attended by the writer, being the first he ever witnessed. It was held in an open field, and the exercises were accompanied by a mighty display of the awakening and converting, as well as sanctifying grace of God. On the third day of the meeting such awful sensations were produced under the preaching, that many stout-hearted sinners were bowed before the Lord, while the people of God were "filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory." A great revival of religion was the consequence of this blessed meeting, particularly in the Bay of Quintie and Augusta circuits, which eventuated in the conversion of hundreds of precious souls.

In the state of New-York, among others, Croton had been selected as a suitable place for camp meetings, and for many years was considered as a hallowed spot on which the people of God from the city of New-York, and the neighboring circuits, assembled for the worship and service of the triune God. And here many sinners have been born of the Spirit, who

perhaps, otherwise might never have heard the joyful sound of salvation. It has, however, latterly been abandoned for another place.

This year the Church was called to mourn over the demise of some of her most eminent and useful ministers.

Of *Tobias Gibson*, who first carried the gospel to the inhabitants of Mississippi, we have already spoken. He is represented as a modest, unassuming man, deep in Christian experience, and most indefatigable in his labors. His ardent thirst for the salvation of souls often led him to those exertions which were too much for his physical strength; and these, together with his frequent exposures in the midst of the western wildernesses, to cold and hunger, and to sleepless nights on the ground, laid the foundation for those infirmities which finally prostrated his feeble frame and brought him to a premature grave.

He preached his last sermon on New-Year's day, in 1804. Its powerful and searching appeals were made a blessing to many; and long did some of the inhabitants of Natchez, which was the principal theatre of his labors in the west, remember his fervent prayers and faithful admonitions, particularly of those which accompanied this his last effort for their salvation. Being greatly esteemed by the people of God, as well as honored by all who could estimate true worth of character, they mourned over his departure from among them, as one mourneth over a son that served him. But while they beheld his calmness of spirit amid the sufferings of his body, his meekness, patience, and resignation to the divine will, as death approached, as well as the firm hope of everlasting

life with which he anticipated his dissolution, they saw such indubitable evidences of the reality and excellence of Christianity, that they could but mingle with their sorrows the rejoicings of such as have hope in God. Infidelity itself shrunk from an inspection of his life, and recoiled at a view of that death which, though dark and gloomy in itself, was surrounded with so brilliant a light as to render the path into the other world luminous and inviting.

Such was Tobias Gibson—such were his labors and sufferings—such his deep devotion to the cause of Christ—and such the peaceful and triumphant manner of his death—that he has left a name and character behind him which "shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

Nicholas Watters was another of those burning and shining lights which, after having enlightened the world for a season, was this year extinguished by death. He was the brother of William Watters, the first Methodist preacher raised in America, and entered the itinerating ministry very soon after his younger brother. They were natives of Maryland, and after traveling and preaching with great acceptance in various parts of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, on the 10th of August, 1804, he ended his life and labors in peace, in the city of Charleston, South Carolina.

Wilson Lee also exchanged the labors of an itinerant minister for the crown of glory prepared for the faithful. He entered the traveling connection in 1784, and soon went into the western country, where he continued in the exercise of his ministry, exposed to all the hardships incident to an itinerating life in new

settlements, until 1792, when he returned to the older states, and was stationed on Salem circuit, New-Jersey. From 1801 to 1803 he filled the office of presiding elder in the Baltimore district. In 1804 he found himself unable longer to do the duties of an efficient preacher, and was accordingly returned on the superannuated list. In the month of April of this year, while at prayer by the bed of a sick person, he had a sudden discharge of blood from the lungs; and from that time he lingered along the shores of mortality until October 11, 1804, when he died full of the hope of immortality, at the house of Walter Worthington, Ann Arundel county, in the state of Maryland.

Wilson Lee has been considered among the most laborious, successful, and self-denying of our early ministers. Though naturally of a slender constitution, he hazarded the hardships of an itinerating life in the western country, and exhibited there all that self-devotion, hardy enterprise, and untiring zeal in the cause of God, which distinguished those men of God who planted the standard of the cross among the early settlers of Tennessee and Kentucky. As he rode from one settlement to another, and from fort to fort, he was often exposed to the ferocious savages of the wilderness, as well as to hunger and thirst, to tiresome days and sleepless nights. But his unquenchable thirst for the salvation of souls, his strong faith in God, and his burning zeal to advance his holy cause, impelled him on in spite of all opposition, amid those "perils in the wilderness," rejoicing in being counted worthy to suffer a little in the cause of Christ. Here he spent the best of his days, and exhausted

his strength in striving to win souls to Jesus Christ; and when he returned to his brethren in the older settlements, with a constitution shattered by the intensity of his labors, it was only to share with them in pursuing the path of obedience to his divine Master, and filling up what remained of the afflictions of Christ. Professing the justifying and sanctifying grace of God, he bore all things with patience, exhibiting in his spirit an example of meekness and gentleness, in his personal appearance of neatness and plainness, and in all his deportment modesty united with a firmness of purpose in carrying into execution the discipline of the Church. He, indeed, left nothing he could do undone which he deemed essential to promote the cause of God. But his ever active mind, his persevering industry in his Master's work, operated so powerfully upon the material vehicle, that "the weary wheels of life stood still," while in the meridian of his life and usefulness. He left, however, a name behind him, which was long remembered with affection and veneration by those of his cotemporaries who survived him, and an example of devotedness to the cause of God which has stimulated many laborers to activity and diligence in cultivating their Master's vineyard.

Benjamin Jones, *John Durbin*, and *Daniel Ryan*, of each of whom it is said that he filled up his days in usefulness, took their departure to a better world in the course of last year.

Two preachers, namely, *Cyrus Stebbins* and *Roger Searl*, withdrew from the connection, and joined the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year,	95,629	24,316	119,945	432
Last year,	89,603	23,531	113,134	400
Increase,	6,026	785	6,811	33

1806. The seven annual conferences were held this year in the usual manner.

This year a paper was submitted to the annual conferences, beginning with the Baltimore conference, by Bishop Asbury, in favor of calling a General Conference, of seven delegates from each annual conference, to meet in the city of Baltimore, in May, 1807, for the purpose of strengthening the episcopacy. This paper was referred to a committee, to consider and report thereon, and all the conferences, except Virginia, reported in favor of the proposition, and elected their delegates accordingly. The report set forth that, in consequence of the declining health of Bishop Whatcoat, who was then supposed to be near his end, the great extension of our work over the continent, and the debilitated state of Bishop Asbury's health, it had become necessary to strengthen the episcopacy, and likewise to provide for a more permanent mode of church government. The report, therefore, recommended that each of the seven annual conferences should elect seven delegates to meet in the city of Baltimore the succeeding May, and that, when so met, they should have power to elect one bishop or more, and also to provide for a future *delegated* General Conference, whose powers should be defined and limited by constitutional restrictions; for hitherto the General Conference possessed unlimited

powers over our entire economy, could alter, abolish, or add to any article of religion or any rule of Discipline. As this depository of power was considered too great for the safety of the Church and the security of its government and doctrine; and as the assembling of all the elders, few or many, at the option of each annual conference, made the representation very unequal; and moreover, if all came who had a right to a seat, involved a great amount of expense, time, and money, Bishop Asbury was exceedingly desirous, before he should depart hence, to provide a remedy for these evils; and this desire was strengthened and excited to action at this time by the concurrent views and wishes of most of the oldest preachers in the conferences.

It is proper to remark that this plan was concurred in, and the delegates were elected by all the annual conferences, until it was submitted to the Virginia conference, where, being warmly opposed by the Rev. Jesse Lee, who had great influence in that conference, a majority voted against its adoption, and so the whole plan was abandoned for the present—for it was the understanding that, unless all the conferences concurred in the measure, it should not be carried into effect. This defeat of a favorite project, so feasible in itself, and apparently so necessary to the prosperity of the Church and the perpetuity of her institutions, was a source of great grief to Bishop Asbury, as well as of regret to those who had concurred in his views.

After the return of Dr. Coke to Europe, he saw fit to change his relation from a single to a married life. He had married a Christian lady of a large fortune, of deep piety, and of ardent devotion to the cause of God, which she evinced after her marriage by cheerfully con-

secrating her income to advance the missionary cause, in which she found her husband, Dr. Coke, so deeply and zealously engaged. This fact he thought proper to communicate to his American brethren, together with a proposition to become a resident in America, on the condition that the continent should be divided into two parts, one of which to be under his superintendency, and the other under the superintendency of Bishop Asbury. This proposition was submitted to the several annual conferences, and an answer was returned to the doctor congratulating him on his happy marriage, but declining to accept of his proposal for a division of the work in this country according to his request, referring, however, the final decision of the question to the next General Conference.

This year Methodism was introduced into some parts of Louisiana. This territory had been recently purchased by the United States from the French government for the sum of fifteen millions of dollars, and was admitted into the Union in 1811. The country was originally settled by the Spaniards and French, the descendants of whom, to distinguish them from other white inhabitants who have emigrated to the country, are called *Creoles*. In a large portion of the country the French language and manners prevailed, and their religious faith and practice were regulated by the Roman Catholic Church; but as the country is fast filling up by Anglo-Americans, and has been for some time connected with the Union as an integral part of the great American family, the language, manners, and institutions of Louisiana are becoming more and more conformed to those generally prevailing in other sections of the republic.

At the time, however, of which we now speak, there were comparatively but few American settlers in the country, and these were scattered thinly in the wilderness or mingled among the French and Spanish inhabitants. As to true religion, it was a stranger to most of the people. Those who made any profession at all were chiefly of the Roman Catholic communion, and these were exceedingly loose in their morals, and much given up to sports and plays. The Sabbath was neglected as a day of sacred rest, or only attended to as a religious festival, alternately for devotional exercises and profane revelry. This being the general state of society as formed by the Creoles of the country, it could not be otherwise expected than that the emigrants who settled among them should gradually assimilate to their manners, modes of thinking and acting. Hence it is stated that profaneness of almost all sorts prevailed to an alarming extent, when, in 1806, the *Rev. Elisha W. Bowman* made his entrance among them as a messenger of the cross of Christ.

The Mississippi district was this year under the presiding eldership of the *Rev. Learner Blackman*, whose charge included *Natchez*, *Wilkinson*, *Claiborne*, *Ochitta*, and *Appalousas* circuits, to the last of which Mr. Bowman was sent, with a view, if practicable, to form societies and establish regular preaching. He penetrated into some of the English settlements on the banks of the Mississippi River, amid many privations and hardships, and in some places was received by the people with gladness, while in others both himself and his message were rejected. He succeeded, however, in collecting congregations, and in forming a regular circuit, and a few classes, made up principally

of members who had removed from the older states, who were happily reclaimed from their backslidden state by his instrumentality. The *Rev. Thomas Lasley* labored on the Ochitta circuit, which he found in a similar condition, in respect to religion and morals, to that of Appalousas. The success with which they cultivated this distant and wild field of labor may be estimated from the fact that they returned forty members of the Church, and that they opened the way for the successful prosecution of the work by those who succeeded them, though it was some time before Methodism gained much influence in that part of the country.

This year a new district was formed, called the *Lower Canada district*, which included *Montreal*, *Quebec*, and *Ottawa*. I have before spoken of Montreal and Ottawa. Nathan Bangs volunteered his services for Quebec. After spending a few weeks in Montreal, to supply them until their preacher, Samuel Coate, arrived, he sailed down the River St. Lawrence for Quebec, and arrived there on Saturday morning. Having a few letters of introduction, he delivered them, and by great exertions succeeded in hiring a room and getting it seated that day, and he preached his first sermon on the Sabbath morning following to a tolerable congregation.

The majority of the people in Quebec were French Roman Catholics, bigotedly attached to all their peculiarities, and, of course, opposed to all Protestant innovations. The next in number and influence were the members of the Church of England, and next to them the Church of Scotland, all manifesting a deadly opposition to Methodism. He found, however, a few

who received him cordially, though with much timidity. Among others he called on a Scotch missionary by the name of *Dick*, who had succeeded in collecting a small congregation, and was treated by him with much affection and respect.

It would doubtless be uninteresting to the reader to enter into a detail of the difficulties with which he had to contend, the mental trials he underwent in striving to plant the gospel in that hardened place, with but small means of support,* and few to countenance his undertaking. For a while the congregation was respectable, as to numbers, but they soon dwindled down to not more than a dozen steady hearers, and not more than three or four of these seemed to be under religious impressions. He has frequently held a prayer meeting with only one besides himself, when each would pray and then dismiss the meeting, though inwardly conscious of the divine approbation, yet with but faint hopes of success. He, however, formed a small society, which, under more faithful and skilful laborers, has since increased to a considerable number, and Methodism has now a firm standing in Quebec.

An attempt was also made this year to establish a mission for the benefit of the French Catholic population of Lower Canada, and *William Snyder*, who understood and could preach in the French language, was appointed to this service. He entered upon his

* In those days we had no missionary society to furnish pecuniary aid to those preachers who went to "break up new ground," as it was called, though Bishop Asbury was in the habit of begging as he passed through the country to supply the wants of the most needy.

work in a French settlement, in the vicinity of Ottawa River, and for a time was cordially received and listened to with much attention, so that great hopes were entertained of a successful issue of his labors. Having occasion, however, to be absent from his field of labor for a few weeks, the parish priest took the opportunity to go among the people and warn them of the danger of hearing the "Protestant heretic," threatening them with excommunication—which, in their estimation, was a sure prelude to damnation—if they did not desist. This so wrought upon their fears, that, upon the return of brother Snyder, not a soul dared to hear him or to receive him into his house. He was, therefore, reluctantly compelled to abandon the enterprise in despair, nor has any thing been done effectually for those people since. The charms of Roman Catholicism still hold them in bondage to their priests.

In Massachusetts also, and in the province of Maine, the work so extended that *New-Bedford*, *Northfield*, *Centreharbor*, *Durham*, and *Vassalborough* circuits were formed, while the work in many places on the older circuits was going forward with encouraging prosperity. *Monongahela*, *Lycoming*, and *Staunton* circuits, within the bounds of the Baltimore conference, were this year added to the list, which shows that the good work was still extending in the frontier settlements.

But the most remarkable outpouring of the Spirit was among the people on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and in some parts of Virginia, chiefly through the agency of a camp meeting which was held on the Eastern Shore at which, during the five days and

nights it continued, it is stated that not less than one thousand souls were converted. This had been a favored place for Methodism from the time of its introduction; and this great work gave it a new impulse, and added fresh vigor to the souls of God's ministers and people. Religion, indeed, prospered generally throughout the bounds of the conferences, as may be seen from the increase of church members.

Bishop Asbury, though deprived of the aid of his devoted colleague in consequence of sickness, attended to his duties with his usual diligence, and was much cheered with the prospects which loomed up before him in various parts of the work, more especially by the agency of the camp meetings, many of which he attended, and entered into their exercises with all the ardor of a youthful minister. We find him this year in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio, traversing the new settlements, and encouraging his brethren and sons in the ministry, by his presence and example. Being in the state of Kentucky during one of their camp meetings, he says, "I ventured on the camp ground again, and preached at eight o'clock. I was weak and unwell, but was divinely assisted while enlarging on Philip. i, 1. May this weighty subject rest on the minds of the preachers, and on none more than the heart of the speaker!"

After speaking of the Western conference, he says, "The brethren were in want, and could not suit themselves; so I parted with my watch, my coat, and my shirt." This was an instance of generosity rarely to be met with, and shows the deep interest he felt for his suffering fellow-laborers in that rugged field.

Finishing his work in this part of his charge, he

recrossed the Alleghany Mountains, in doing which, he says, "One of the descents is like the roof of a house for nearly a mile. I rode, I walked, I sweat, I trembled, and my old knees failed. Here are gullies, and rocks, and precipices; nevertheless, the way is as good as the path over the Table Mountain—bad is the best." He passed on through North and South Carolina, and in the city of Charleston he rested for a few days from his toils, though he says that he was "neither unemployed nor triflingly," but was happy in the midst of his friends, and surrounded by all the comforts which kindness could bestow." "If we call," he remarks, "for social prayer seven times a day, there are none to complain; the house is our own, and profane people board not with us. My time is spent in reading, writing, and receiving all who come, whites and Africans"—"God the Lord is here." What a contrast between his external comforts here, and those which he enjoyed in many other places! But while he could say in every place, "God the Lord is here," he could not be otherwise than happy and contented inwardly.

Among the deaths of preachers which occurred this year was that of *Bishop Whatcoat*, who departed this life at the house of *Richard Bassett, Esq.*, ex-governor of the state of Delaware, on the 5th of July, 1806, in the seventy-first year of his age. Of his early life, conversion, and call to the ministry, we have already spoken, when giving an account of his election and consecration to the episcopal office. From that important period of his life, he gave "full proof of his ministry," fulfilling his high trust with fidelity, honored and beloved by all who knew him.

From the time of his entrance upon his work as an itinerant superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, until he was disabled by sickness and debility, he traveled regularly through his vast diocese, which extended over the entire continent, preaching almost every day to the people, visiting the annual conferences, sometimes in company with his venerable colleague, Bishop Asbury, and sometimes alone, discharging his responsible duties with marked satisfaction to all concerned. A complication of painful diseases arrested his career of usefulness, and compelled him to remit those public labors in which his soul had so long delighted. For thirteen weeks he bore, with the most exemplary patience, and devout resignation to the divine will, the excruciating pains with which his body was afflicted, expressing, in the midst of them all, his faith in Christ and his firm hope of everlasting life, and finally triumphed over the "last enemy," being "more than a conqueror through Him who loved him."

Bishop Asbury, some time after Bishop Whatcoat's death, visiting the place of his sepulture, at the Wesley Chapel, in Dover, Del., preached his funeral sermon from 2 Tim. iii, 10, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience." In the course of his sermon he remarked, in substance, "I have known Richard Whatcoat, from the time I was fourteen years of age to sixty-two years most intimately, and have tried him most accurately in respect to the soundness of his faith, on the doctrines of human depravity, the complete and general atonement of Jesus Christ, the insufficiency of either moral or ceremonial righteousness

for justification, in opposition to faith alone in the merit and righteousness of Christ, and the doctrine of regeneration and sanctification. I have also known his manner of life, at all times and places, before the people, both as a Christian and a minister; his long-suffering, for he was a man of great affliction, both of body and mind, having been exercised with severe diseases and great labors." And from this intimate acquaintance with the man and his work, the bishop declares, that such was his unabated charity, his ardent love to God and man, his patience and resignation amid the unavoidable ills of life, that he always exemplified the tempers and conduct of a most devoted servant of God, and of an exemplary Christian minister.

As he had lived for God alone, and had assiduously consecrated all his time and powers to the service of his church, so he had neither time nor inclination to "lay up treasures upon earth"—hence it is stated that he died with less property than was sufficient to defray the expenses of his funeral. He could therefore say more in truth than most of the pretended successors of St. Peter, who is claimed by some as the first link in the episcopal succession, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have," "my soul and body's powers," I cheerfully consecrate to the service of God and man.

These remarks of themselves sufficiently indicate the character of the deceased, without saying any thing more; yet it may be proper to add that though we do not claim for him deep erudition nor extensive science, he was profoundly learned in the sacred Scriptures, thoroughly acquainted with Wesleyan theology, and well versed in all the varying systems of divinity with

which the Christian world has been loaded, and could therefore "rightly divide the word of truth, giving to every one his portion of meat in due season." For gravity of deportment, meekness of spirit, deadness to the world, and deep devotion to God, perhaps he was not excelled, if indeed equalled by any of his contemporaries or successors. "Sober without sadness, and cheerful without levity," says the record of his death, he was equally removed from the severe austerity of the gloomy monk, and the lightness of the facetious and empty-brained witling. His words were weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and when uttered, either in the way of rebuke, admonition, or instruction, they were calculated to "minister grace to the hearer." It is said, that on a particular occasion, when in company with Bishop Asbury, the latter was complaining loudly of the perpetual annoyance of so much useless company: Bishop Whatcoat, with great modesty and meekness, mildly remarked, "O bishop, how much worse should we feel were we entirely neglected!" The former bowed an acquiescence to the remark, and acknowledged his obligations to his amiable colleague for the seasonableness of the reproof, but much more for the *manner* in which it was administered—an occurrence alike creditable to them both.

His preaching is said to have been generally attended with a remarkable *unction from the Holy One*. Hence those who sat under his word, if they were believers in Christ, felt that it was good to be there, for his doctrine distilled as the dew upon the tender herb, and as the rain upon the mown grass. One who had heard him remarked, that though he could not follow him in all his researches—intimating that he went be-

yond his depth in some of his thoughts—yet he felt that he was listening to a messenger of God, not only from the solemnity of his manner, but also from the "refreshing from the presence of the Lord," which so manifestly accompanied his word. The softness of his persuasions won upon the affections of the heart, while the rich flow of gospel truth which dropped from his lips enlightened the understanding.

Such was Bishop Whatcoat. And while we justly attribute to him those qualities which constitute an "able minister of the New Testament," we present, as the distinguishing trait of his character, a meekness and modesty of spirit which, united with a simplicity of intention and gravity of deportment, commended him to all as a pattern worthy of their imitation. So dear is he in the recollection of those who, from personal intercourse, best knew and appreciated his worth, that I have heard many such say, that they would give much could they possess themselves of a correct resemblance of him upon canvass. But as he has left no such likeness of himself behind, we must be content with offering this feeble tribute of respect to his memory, and then strive so to imitate his virtues that we may at last see him as he is, and unite with him in ascribing "honor and dominion to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever."

Benjamin Iliff also, after traveling about four years, in which he won the confidence and affection of all who knew him, was taken from his labors to his rest in heaven, bidding adieu to his friends with these words, "I have lost sight of the world. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Two, namely, *Ralph Williston*, and *Comfort C*

Smith, withdrew from the Church; the former connected himself first with the Lutheran, and then with the Protestant Episcopal Church, and was settled for some time in the city of New-York, whence he removed to the south.

One, *Sylvester Foster*, was expelled, forty-eight were located, ten returned supernumerary, and six superannuated.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	103,313	27,257	130,570	452
Last year	95,629	24,316	119,945	433
Increase	7,684	2,941	10,625	19

1807. Seven conferences were held this year, at which Bishop Asbury, being deprived of the services of his colleague, Bishop Whatcoat, was obliged to attend alone, and to discharge the duties devolving upon the episcopal office. Speaking of this hard toil, after traveling through Vermont, New-Hampshire, and part of Massachusetts, he exclaims, "Must I walk through the seven conferences, and travel six thousand miles in ten months?" This, however, by the blessing of God, he was enabled to do, though it cost him many a wearisome day, in clambering the mountains, and crossing the valleys, in his journey from one extreme part of the continent to the other. In these journeyings he was frequently compelled to lodge in taverns; but, whatever might be the character of the house or the people, he always made it a point to propose prayer in every place where he stopped, though it might be only for a breakfast or dinner, and seldom was he denied this privilege. In this way he per-

formed the work of a *missionary*, in the most emphatical sense of that word. But that which he considered more than a compensation for all labors and sacrifices—sacrifices to which few modern missionaries submit, was the consolation of religion in his own heart, and the spread of the work of God in almost every part of the continent.

This year John Travis was sent to form a new circuit in the new territory of Missouri. Missouri at that time was considered a part of Louisiana, and the first settlers were chiefly of the Roman Catholic persuasion; but the tide of emigration, which was then setting toward the west with a strong current, was rolling the inhabitants from the older states into that country with great rapidity, and every year with increasing numbers. Though this territory was not admitted into the Union until 1820, yet at this time there were in it not less than 16,000 inhabitants, about one-fifth of whom were slaves. Though on the western bank of the Mississippi River the land is low and swampy, and of course untenable and unhealthy, yet beyond this the lands rise in beautiful undulations, and when brought under cultivation, proved to be rich and fertile, and therefore invited the industrious husbandman to take up his residence on them.

Though the population was sparse, the roads bad, and the people generally averse to the self-denying truths of the gospel, Mr. Travis succeeded in attracting the attention of some to the things of religion, and he returned the next year, as the fruit of his labor, fifty-six members of the Church; and the work of God has continued to spread through that south-western section of country, keeping pace with the extension of

the settlements as they gradually penetrated farther and still farther into the woods and prairies of Missouri.

Notwithstanding *Savannah*, the chief city in the state of Georgia, was visited by that distinguished servant of God, the Rev. John Wesley, as early as 1736, in the very infancy of the colony, yet it seems that no effectual efforts had been made since his departure amid the unmerited reproach heaped upon him by his enemies, to plant Methodism in that place until this year. Wesley left the town in 1737, and in 1740 Whitefield, who succeeded Wesley, founded his orphan house, which remains only to tell the benevolence of its founder in connection with the failure of his project—for it has long since crumbled to ruins—but it appears that during the seventy years of interval from the time that Wesley left those ungrateful people, no opening was presented for the establishment of Methodism, until 1807.

It is true that, as early as 1790, *Hope Hull* was sent to Savannah, and he preached a few times in a chair-maker's shop belonging to a Mr. Lowry; but such was the opposition manifested toward him that he was assailed with mob violence, and his success was small and the prospects very discouraging. He was followed, in 1796, by *Jonathan Jackson* and *Josiah Randle*, but they left the place without making any permanent impression. In 1800 *John Garvin* made an ineffectual attempt to collect a society in Savannah, and though he succeeded, with many difficulties, in inducing a few to attend his meetings for a season, yet he also abandoned the place in despair. The next attempt was made by a *Mr. Cloud*, an apostate from

Methodism, but who assumed the name of a Methodist preacher for the nonce; and though he attracted some attention for a short time, and even procured from the corporation the lease of a lot on which he erected some buildings, yet he was soon forsaken by the people, and left to his own wanderings. This movement only tended to increase the existing prejudices of the people against the Methodists, and accordingly rendered their future progress the more difficult.

At the South Carolina conference held in Sparta, Georgia, December 29, 1806, the subject of making another attempt to establish Methodism in Savannah was presented to the conference by a forcible appeal from some warm friends of the cause. Bishop Asbury, whose heart burned with intense desire for the prosperity of religion, and who always had his eye fixed on all important posts, pressed the subject upon the conference with great earnestness, and the conference responded to the call with much cordiality and zeal. Commending the case to the Church for special prayer, *Samuel Dunwody*, at that time young in the ministry, but humble, bold, and zealous in the cause of his Master, was selected by the bishop, and sent to Savannah. He at first procured a small room, where he taught some children, and his ministerial labors were, for a time, confined to the family where he resided, to his school-room, poor-house and hospital. At the end of the year he returned twelve members, five whites and seven colored, as the reward of his labors.

Though a small beginning was thus made, it was some time before Methodism was established in Savannah. The prejudices of the people rose high, and

the cause was much impeded by the imprudent conduct of two of the preachers who succeeded Mr. Dunwody. But, after hard toiling, they finally succeeded, by soliciting aid from various parts of the country, in erecting a house of worship in 1812, which was dedicated to the service of almighty God by Bishop Asbury, and was called *Wesley Chapel*. This took place about seventy-five years after the town was visited by John Wesley, and the spirit which vented itself in opposition to him seems to have descended to their posterity, and shown itself in similar acts of hostility to his followers; yet by patient perseverance in well-doing, this prejudice has been measurably overcome, and the cause of Methodism has taken a firm stand in Savannah, and is exerting a salutary influence on its citizens.

This was a very prosperous year generally throughout the connection, and many were brought to the knowledge of the truth and added to the Church through various parts of the United States. In the older states the camp meetings were multiplied, and attended with the most happy consequences, particularly in Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and Georgia. In the city of New-York there was a remarkable revival of religion, attended, in some instances, with symptoms similar to those which had been exhibited at the camp meetings in the western country.

James Lattomus and *Peter Jayne* took their departure to a world of rest, leaving a testimony behind them of devotedness to the cause of God. Thirty-two were located, six returned supernumerary, eight superannuated, and one, *Nathan Felch*, had withdrawn and connected himself with the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	114,727	29,863	144,590*	516
Last year	103,313	27,257	130,570	452
Increase	11,414	2,606	14,020	64

CHAPTER VII.

The General Conference of 1808.

THIS conference assembled in the city of Baltimore, May 1, 1808, and was composed of one hundred and twenty-nine members, namely, nineteen from the New-York, seven from the New-England, eleven from the Western, eleven from the South Carolina, eighteen from the Virginia, thirty-one from the Baltimore, and thirty-two from the Philadelphia conference.

For the first time since the organization of the Church in 1784, Dr. Coke was absent from the General Conference, and as Bishop Whatcoat had deceased, Bishop Asbury was the sole president of the conference. After the organization of the conference, by the appointment of a secretary and the adoption of rules for the government of its proceedings, the conference appointed a committee of correspondence, to take into consideration certain communications from the British conference, and from Dr. Coke, and to report thereon.

It will be recollected that, in accordance with the

* There is an error of nine in the printed minutes for this year.

earnest request of the British conference, the General Conference of 1804 had agreed to the return of Dr. Coke to Europe, and that he might have liberty to reside there until this General Conference, unless sooner recalled by three of the annual conferences. After his return to Europe, and after his marriage, he made a proposal, as before related, to come over, and take up his permanent residence in America, on condition that the continent should be divided as nearly equal as might be, between him and Bishop Asbury, as the superintending bishops. Though this proposition was not agreeable to the American preachers, and therefore was not acceded to by them in their reply to Dr. Coke's circular, yet it shows most manifestly the strong obligation which the doctor felt to fulfil his contract with the General Conference, and of his intention, provided his wishes were complied with, to make America his permanent residence in future.

It seems, however, that the answer to his circular gave him some uneasiness, from an apprehension that his American brethren were dissatisfied with his conduct. To remove, therefore, all cause of disquietude from their minds, and to explain more fully his views and wishes, he sent to this General Conference, the following letter:—

"TO THE GENERAL AMERICAN CONFERENCE

"*City of Durham*, (*England*,) *Nov.* 16, 1807.

"Very dear and greatly respected Brethren:—

"My absence from your solemn meeting calls for a minute explanation of my motives for absence, and my future views. I did not expect, during my different short visits to your connection, to have any thing to do in the

management of your work, except the honor of presiding at your General Conference, and preaching in your pulpits. I never returned to England without your leave, from the time I offered myself to be wholly yours: and whatever my own private judgment might have been, I should, in every instance, have considered your vote as the voice of God, if you had, on the whole, judged it best to have refused that leave. The last time I visited you, I came over without any expectation of returning. I settled my little affairs in this country, and brought over with me every thing I had, except those parts of my library which I should not soon want, but which I left in such a manner that on the shortest notice they might be sent over to me—and also such copies of my commentary as I wished that my European brethren would be so kind as to sell for me. I did not take a decisive farewell of my brethren in Europe, as I was not sure whether you would, in your circumstances, as they respected Bishop Asbury, receive me as an *efficient* superintendent or bishop among you *in any degree* or *manner*: for this reason only I consented to carry over to you an address which contained a clause in it requesting my return to Europe. I should otherwise have strongly objected to the clause: however, I repeatedly gave very strong intimations, both to the British and Irish conferences, of the improbability of my return. I write not the above as if I did not highly prize my situation in the European connection. As general superintendent of their missions at home and abroad, as president of the Irish part of the connection, as having all their pulpits in the United Kingdom open to me when and as often as I please, and in many other respects possessing influence for great usefulness, I feel myself under unspeakable obligations to my European brethren. But I have made the above observations to convince you, that I held and kept my obligations and engagements to you, *to strengthen your episco-*

pacy whenever you pleased, most sacred. It is true, I wrote to you a circular letter, which, I now acknowledge, was out of order; and therefore I beg pardon for writing it: but I did not intend to be irregular. I hardly knew what to write in order to bring matters to an explanation. For I was assured that you yourselves, after due explanation, would not wish to draw me out of a very extensive and successful sphere of usefulness, *merely to preach*; and, instead of strengthening the episcopacy, have less to do in the management of the work than the preacher who superintends the smallest circuit in America.

"And now, you will ask, 'What are we to expect from you.' I will answer with the most perfect candor. If it be your judgment and vote *that my residence with you will probably assist to preserve your union*; and you agree that I shall have a full right to give my judgment in every thing, in the general and annual conferences, on the making of laws, the stationing of the preachers, sending out missionaries, and every thing else, which, as a bishop or superintendent belongs to my office, I will, on receiving your answer, settle our affairs with the utmost expedition, and come over to you for life. You may observe, I do not desire any *decisive* power. I want no new condition. I only want to be perfectly ascertained, that if I reside with you, I shall be authorized by you to fulfil my office in the way above mentioned; without which our reciprocal engagements would be a perfect nullity, and I should be entirely the same among you, except in the article of preaching. By this proposal I break no engagement: I want nothing but a full explanation, and a part of that liberty which I have in the European connection. In Europe, I give my judgment in the two conferences, and in the representative meetings for preparing the stations of preachers for the conference, as far as I judge it my duty, *on every point*, and have also a vote when we do vote on any sub-

ject. In missionary matters I am here allowed a negative and my committee a negative; this last I do not desire in America; but I desire the power of doing extensive good. If this cannot at present be granted *by the authority of the General Conference*, you may insert me in your minutes as formerly: or you may first insert the resident bishop or bishops, and add a N. B., Dr. Coke (or Bishop Coke, as you please) resides in Europe, till he be called to the States by the General Conference, or by the annual conferences; or if this be not agreeable, you must *expel* me, (for dropping me out of your public minutes will be to all intents and purposes an expulsion,) and leave what I have done for your connection to God alone: and though you forget me, God will not forget me.

"I do assure you, very dear and respected brethren, that I love and esteem you highly, and am, with most unfeigned sincerity, your affectionate and faithful servant,

"T. Coke.

"P. S.—My precious wife desires that she may not be considered in the least degree in this business. She is no hinderance to me in any thing, but a blessing in all things. We are always, as it were, traveling, and I annually visit and preach at more places than I did for many years before my marriage."

There was further cause of dissatisfaction with Dr. Coke. It seems that, in the spring of 1791, Dr. Coke, on the eve of his departure for England, addressed a confidential letter to Bishop White, bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Pennsylvania, in which he proposed a union between that and the Methodist Episcopal Church, on certain conditions, with which the officers of that Church did not see fit to comply. As several versions have been given of this affair, to prevent misunderstandings hereafter, I

think it proper to give the letter of Dr. Coke entire. It is as follows:—

"RIGHT REV. SIR:—Permit me to intrude a little on your time upon a subject of great importance.

"You, I believe, are conscious that I was brought up in the Church of England, and have been ordained a presbyter of that Church. For many years I was prejudiced, even I think to bigotry, in favor of it; but through a variety of causes or incidents, to mention which would be tedious and useless, my mind was exceedingly biased on the other side of the question. In consequence of this I am not sure but I went further in the separation of our Church in America than Mr. Wesley, from whom I had received my commission, did intend. He did indeed solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right so to do, with episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that an entire separation should take place. He, being pressed by our friends on this side of the water for ministers to administer the sacraments to them, (there being very few of the clergy of the Church of England then in the States,) went further, I am sure, than he would have gone, if he had foreseen some events which followed. And this I am certain of—that he is now sorry for the separation.

"But what can be done for a re-union, which I much wish for; and to accomplish which, Mr. Wesley, I have no doubt, would use his influence to the utmost? The affection of a very considerable number of the preachers and most of the people is very strong toward him, notwithstanding the excessive ill usage he received from a few. My interest also is not small; both his and mine would readily, and to the utmost, be used to accomplish that (to us) very desirable object; if a readiness were shown by the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to re-unite.

"It is even *to your Church* an object of great importance.

We have now above sixty thousand adults in our society in these States, and about two hundred and fifty traveling ministers and preachers; besides a great number of local preachers, very far exceeding the number of traveling preachers; and some of those local preachers are men of very considerable abilities. But if we number the Methodists as most people number the members of their Church, viz., by the families which constantly attend the divine ordinances in their places of worship, they will make a larger body than you probably conceive. The society, I believe, may be safely multiplied by five on an average to give us our stated congregations; which will then amount to three hundred thousand. And if the calculation which, I think, some eminent writers have made, be just, three-fifths of mankind are un-adult, (if I may use the expression,) at any given period, it will follow that all the families, the adults of which form our congregations in these States, amount to seven hundred and fifty thousand. About one-fifth of these are blacks.

"The work now extends in length from Boston to the south of Georgia; and in breadth from the Atlantic to Lake Champlain, Vermont, Albany, Redstone, Holstein, Kentucky, Cumberland, &c.

"But there are many hinderances in the way. Can they be removed?

"1. Our ordained ministers will not, ought not to give up their right of administering the sacraments. I do not think that the generality of them, perhaps none of them, would refuse to submit to a re-ordination, if other hinderances were removed out of the way. I must here observe, that between sixty and seventy only out of the two hundred and fifty have been ordained presbyters, and about sixty deacons (only.) The presbyters are the choicest of the whole.

"2. The other preachers would hardly submit to a re-

union, if the possibility of their rising up to ordination depended on the present bishops in America. Because, though they are *all*, I think I may say, zealous, pious, and very useful men, yet they are not acquainted with the learned languages. Besides, they would argue,—If the present bishops would waive the article of the learned languages, yet their successors might not.

"My desire of a re-union is so sincere and earnest, that these difficulties almost make me tremble; and yet something must be done before the death of Mr. Wesley, otherwise I shall despair of success: for though my influence among the Methodists in these states as well as in Europe is, I doubt not, increasing, yet Mr. Asbury, whose influence is very capital, will not easily comply; nay, I know he will be exceedingly averse to it.

"In Europe, where some steps had been taken, tending to a separation, all is at an end. Mr. Wesley is a determined enemy of it, and I have lately borne an open and successful testimony against it.

"Shall I be favored with a private interview with you in Philadelphia? I shall be there, God willing, on Tuesday the 17th of May. If this be agreeable, I will beg of you just to signify it in a note, directed to me at Mr. Jacob Baker's, merchant, Market-street, Philadelphia; or, if you please, by a few lines sent me by the return of the post, at Philip Rogers's, Esq., in Baltimore, from yourself or Dr. Magaw, and I will wait upon you with my friend Dr. Magaw. We can then enlarge on these subjects.

"I am conscious of it, that secrecy is of great importance in the present state of the business, till the minds of you, your brother bishops, and Mr. Wesley, be circumstantially known. I must therefore beg that these things be confined to yourself and Dr. Magaw, till I have the honor of seeing you.

"Thus, you see, I have made a bold venture on your

honor and candor, and have opened my whole heart to you on the subject, as far as the extent of a small letter will allow me. If you put equal confidence in me, you will find me candid and faithful.

"I have, notwithstanding, been guilty of inadvertencies. Very lately, I found myself obliged (for the pacifying of my conscience) to write a penitential letter to the Rev. Mr. Jarratt, which gave him great satisfaction: and for the same reason I must write another to the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew. When I was last in America, I prepared and corrected a great variety of things for our magazines, indeed, almost every thing that was printed, except some loose hints which I had taken of one of my journeys, and which I left in my hurry with Mr. Asbury, without any correction, entreating that no part of them might be printed which would be improper or offensive. But through great inadvertency (I suppose) he suffered some reflections on the characters of the two above-mentioned gentlemen to be inserted in the magazine, for which I am very sorry: and probably shall not rest till I have made my acknowledg ment more public; though Mr. Jarratt does not desire it.

"I am not sure whether I have not also offended you, sir, by accepting of one of the offers made me by you and Dr. Magaw, of the use of your churches, about six years ago, on my first visit to Philadelphia, without informing you of our plan of separation from the Church of England. If I did offend, (as I doubt I did, especially from what you said on the subject to Mr. Richard Dellam, of Abington,) I sincerely beg yours and Dr. Magaw's pardon. I will endeavor to amend. But, alas! I am a frail, weak creature.

"I will intrude no longer at present. One thing only I will claim from your candor—that if you have no thoughts of improving this proposal, you will burn this letter, and take no more notice of it (for it would be a pity to have us entirely alienated from each other, if we cannot unite in

the manner my ardent wishes desire.) But if you will further negotiate the business, I will explain my mind still more fully to you on the probabilities of success.

"In the meantime, permit me, with great respect, to subscribe myself, right reverend sir, your very humble servant in Christ, THOMAS COKE.

"*Richmond, April* 24, 1791.

"The Right Rev. Father in God, Bishop White."

The following is Bishop White's answer:—

"REV. SIR:—My friend, Dr. Magaw, has this day put into my hands your letter of the 24th of April, which, I trust, I received with a sense of the importance of the subject, and of the answer I am to give to God for the improvement of every opportunity of building up his Church. Accordingly, I cannot but make choice of the earliest of the two ways you point out, to inform you, that I shall be very happy in the opportunity of conversing with you at the time proposed.

"You mention two difficulties in the way of the proposed union. And there are further difficulties which suggest themselves to my mind. But I can say of the one and of the other, that I do not think them insuperable, provided there be a conciliatory disposition on both sides. So far as I am concerned, I think that such a disposition exists.

"It has not been my temper, sir, to despond in regard to the extension of Christianity in this new world: and in addition to the promises of the great Head of the Church, I have always imagined that I perceived the train of second causes so laid by the good providence of God, as to be promoting what we believe to be his will in this respect. On the other hand, I feel the weight of most powerful discouragements, in the increasing number of the avowed patrons of infidelity, and of others, who pretend to confess the divine authority of our holy religion, while they en-

deavor to strip it of its characteristic doctrines. In this situation, it is rather to be expected, that distinct Churches, agreeing in fundamentals, should make mutual sacrifices for a union, than that any Church should divide into two bodies, without a difference being even alleged to exist, in any leading point. For the preventing of this, the measures which you may propose cannot fail of success, unless there be on one side, or on both, a most lamentable deficiency of Christian temper.

"I remember the conversation you allude to with Mr. Dellam: I hope I did not express myself uncharitably, or even indelicately. As to personal offence toward me, it is out of the question: for I had not at that time any connection with St. Paul's Church. But this, as well as the other parts of your letter, may be discoursed of at the proposed interview. Therefore, with assurance of the desired secrecy, and with requesting you to accept a like promise of candor to that which I credit from you, I conclude myself at present

"Your brother in Christ,

"And very humble servant,

"W. W."*

It will be perceived that the above correspondence was considered by the parties concerned as altogether confidential, and was so kept, according to Bishop White's account of the transaction, until the summer of 1804, when he communicated the fact, in answer to their inquiries, to the Rev. Simon Wilmer, of the Protestant, and the Rev. John M'Klaskey, of the Methodist Episcopal Church. "The matter being variously reported," says Bishop White, "a copy of the letter was, after some lapse of time, delivered to the

* Memoirs Protestant Episcopal Church, page 343.

Rev. Dr. Kemp, of Maryland, and at last published in a controversy raised in the diocese."

The letter being thus made public, it is not strange that many of the friends of Dr. Coke, and of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to whom these things were unknown until now, should have been dissatisfied with Dr. Coke, and demand from him an explanation. This called from him the following letter to this General Conference* :—

"*Near Leeds*, (*Yorkshire*,) *Jan.* 29, 1808.

"TO THE GENERAL AMERICAN CONFERENCE.

"MY VERY DEAR BRETHREN :—I wrote to you a letter about two months ago, directed to the care of my dear brethren, the Messrs Cooper and Wilson, in which I briefly opened my mind to you concerning my relation toward you, observing, to this purport, that if you judged that my being with you would help to preserve your union, and if I was allowed to give my opinion or judgment on every station of the preachers, as far as I chose, and also upon every thing else that could come under the inspection of the bishops or superintendents, you might call me, and we would settle our affairs in Europe as soon as possible, and sail for America, and be with you for life. Without your compliance with the latter point, viz., in respect to a full right of giving my judgment, I should be so far from being useful in preserving union, that I should *merely* fill the place of a preacher.

"But there is one point more which I must also notice. I find that a letter which I wrote to Bishop White in 1791 has been animadverted upon, though, if I mistake not, the letter itself has not been published.

* This and the former letter to the General Conference, are among the documents of said conference, preserved in the handwriting of Dr. Coke himself, italicized as herein printed.

"There are very few of you who can possibly recollect any thing of what I am next going to add. Many of you were then only little children. We had at that time no regular General Conferences. One only had been held in the year 1784. I had, indeed, with great labor and fatigue, a few months before I wrote this letter to Bishop White, prevailed on James O'Kelly and the thirty-six traveling preachers who had withdrawn with him from all connection with Bishop Asbury, to submit to the decision of a General Conference. This conference was to be held in about a year and a half after my departure from the States. And at this conference, held, I think, the latter end of 1792, I proposed and obtained that great blessing to the American connection, a permanency for General Conferences, which were to be held at stated times. Previously to the holding of this conference, (except the general one held in 1784,) there were only small district meetings, excepting the council which was held at Cokesbury College either in 1791 or 1792. Except the union which most justly subsisted between Bishop Asbury on the one hand, and the preachers and people on the other, the society, as such, taken as an aggregate, was almost like a rope of sand. I longed to see matters on a footing likely to be permanent. Bishop Asbury did the same: and it was that view of things, I doubt not, which led Bishop Asbury, the year before, to call and to endeavor to establish a regular council, who were to meet him annually at Cokesbury. In this point I differed in sentiment from my venerable brother. But I saw the danger of our situation, though I well knew that God was sufficient for all things. I did verily believe then, that, under God, the connection would be more likely to be saved from convulsions by a union with the old Episcopal Church, than any other way —not by a dereliction of ordination, sacraments, and the Methodist discipline, but by a junction on proper terms

Bishop White, in two interviews I had with him in Philadelphia, gave me reason to believe that this junction might be accomplished with ease. Dr. Magaw was perfectly sure of it. Indeed, (if Mr. Ogden, of New-Jersey, did not mistake in the information he gave me,) a canon passed the house of bishops of the old Episcopal Church in favor of it. Bishop Madison, according to the same information, took the canon to the lower house. 'But it was there thrown out,' said Mr. Ogden, to whom I explained the whole business, 'because they did not understand the full meaning of it.' Mr. Ogden added, that he spoke against it, because he did not understand it; but that it would have met with his warm support, had he understood the full intention of it.

I had provided in the fullest manner, in my indispensably necessary conditions, for the security, and, I may say, for the independence of our discipline and places of worship. But I thought (perhaps erroneously, and I *believe so now*) that our field of action would have been exceedingly enlarged by that junction, and that myriads would have attended our ministry in consequence of it, who were at that time much prejudiced against us. All these things unitedly considered, led me to write the letter, and meet Bishop White and Dr. Magaw on the subject in Philadelphia.

"But it may be asked, why did I not consult Bishop Asbury, before I took these steps? I answer, It was impossible. I was at and near Philadelphia, and he was somewhere in the south. We had finished our district meetings, and he was to be in the state of Maryland about the time of my sailing for England. I wanted that every thing should be prepared against my return, God willing, in about a year and a half, for further consideration—that Bishop White, &c., should have time to consult their convention—and that I might also lay the matter before

Bishop Asbury, and correspond with him upon the subject, and after that, if proper, bring the business before the General Conference, which was to be held in order to take into consideration James O'Kelly's division. Before I sailed for England, I met Bishop Asbury at Newcastle in the state of Delaware, (from which place I went on board,) and laid the matter before him, who, with that caution which peculiarly characterizes him, gave me no decisive opinion on the subject.

"The next objection (and, I think, the only important one remaining) is the following: 'If you did not think that the episcopal ordination of Mr. Asbury was valid, why did you ordain him? Was there not duplicity in this business?' I answer,

"1. I never, since I could reason on those things, considered the doctrine of *the uninterrupted apostolic succession of bishops* as at all valid or true.

"2. I am of our late venerable father Mr. Wesley's opinion, that the order of bishops and presbyters is one and the same.

"3. I believe that the episcopal form of church government is the best in the world, when the episcopal power is under due regulations and responsibility.

"4. I believe that it is well to follow the example of the primitive church as exemplified in the word of God, by setting apart persons for great ministerial purposes by the imposition of hands, but especially those who are appointed for offices of the first rank in the church.

"From all I have advanced, you may easily perceive, my dear brethren, that I do not consider the imposition of hands, on the one hand, as essentially necessary for any office in the church; nor do I, on the other hand, think that the repetition of the imposition of hands for the same office, when important circumstances require it, is at all improper.

"If it be granted that my plan of union with the old Episcopal Church was desirable, (*which now, I think, was not so, though I most sincerely believed it to be so at that time,*) then if the plan could not have been accomplished without a repetition of the imposition of hands for the same office, I did believe, and do now believe, and have no doubt that the repetition of the imposition of hands would have been perfectly justifiable for the enlargement of the field of action, &c., and would not, by any means, have invalidated the former consecration or imposition of hands. Therefore, I have no doubt but my consecration of Bishop Asbury was perfectly valid; and would have been so even if he had been re-consecrated. I never did apply to the general convention or any other convention for reconsecration. I never intended that either Bishop Asbury or myself should give up our episcopal office, if the junction were to take place; but I should have had no scruple then, nor should I now, *if the junction were desirable*, to have submitted to, or to submit to a reimposition of hands in order to accomplish a great object: but I do say again, I do *not* now believe such a junction desirable.

"I have thus simply and candidly, though in few words, told you my whole mind on this subject. I do not consider my solemn engagements to you invalidated by any thing I have done, or you have done. But I charge you by the glory of God, and by every tie of love, gratitude, and candor, that you take no step which may injure my character. And now I conclude with assuring you that I greatly love and esteem you; that it is a delight to me to pray for your prosperity, and that I am your very affectionate brother and faithful friend, T. COKE."

These letters, having been read in the conference, were referred to the committee of correspondence, who reported the following answer to Dr. Coke:—

"*Baltimore, May 25th*, 1808.

"VERY DEAR AND MUCH-RESPECTED BROTHER:—Your letters of Nov. 16th, 1807, and Jan. 29th, 1808, together with the address of the British Conference to our General Conference, were severally read to us in our open conference; and the different subjects therein contained were seriously and solemnly considered, in all their various bearings and connections.

"We have answered the address of the British Conference in a separate letter from this, which you, as one of that body, will see. We have complied with their request, in agreeing that you may continue with them, till you are called to us by the General Conference, or by all the annual conferences respectively.

"Your two letters were respectfully received and had a salutary effect upon our minds. The reasons which you have assigned for some former transactions, and the ingenuous candor which you have manifested, in frankly acknowledging and declaring the motives and inducements that led you to those measures; together with your affectionate acknowledgment that in certain cases you were mistaken as to your views of some of the points in question; as likewise your manifest friendship and good will to this connection and your American brethren, and your evident solicitude to retain a place and standing among us; taking these circumstances collectively, they had a great influence upon some of our minds, in removing certain suspicious fears, which had been imbibed, rather unfavorable to your standing among us.

"You may be assured that we feel an affectionate regard for you; that we gratefully remember your repeated labors of love toward us; and that we sensibly feel our obligations for the services you have rendered us. We hope that no circumstance will ever alienate our Christian affection from you, or yours from us. We wish to main-

tain and to cultivate a good understanding and brotherly unity with you, and with all our European brethren. In full conference, of near one hundred and thirty members, we entered into a very long conversation, and very serious and solemn debate, upon sundry resolutions which were laid before us, relative to your case. Probably on no former occasion, in any conference in America, was so much said in defence of your character and to your honor as a ministerial servant of God and of his church. Your worth, your labors, your disinterested services, fatigues, dangers, and difficulties, to serve your American brethren, were set forth pathetically, and urged with the force of reason and truth, in an argumentative manner; and our candid and impartial judgments were constrained to yield to the conclusion, that we were bound by the ties of moral and religious obligations to treat you most respectfully, and to retain a grateful remembrance of all your labors of love toward us. During the debate your name was mentioned, and your character spoken of with much respect and affection. Our deliberations and arguments on this head terminated in the adoption of the following resolutions, viz:—

"1. *Resolved*, That the General Conference do agree and consent that Dr. Coke may continue in Europe till he be called to the United States by the General Conference or by all the American conferences respectively.

"2. *Resolved*, That we do retain a grateful remembrance of the services and labors of Dr. Coke among us; and that the thanks of this conference are hereby acknowledged to him, and to God, for all his labors of love toward us, from the time he first left his native country to serve us.

"3. *Resolved*, That Dr. Coke's name shall be retained in our minutes, after the names of the bishops, in a 'N. B. Dr. Coke, at the request of the British Conference, and by consent of our General Conference, resides in Europe:

he is not to exercise the office of superintendent among us, in the United States, until he be recalled by the General Conference or by all the annual conferences respectively.'

"Your name is accordingly printed in the minutes which were put to press after the adoption of the above resolutions.

"We have elected and set apart our beloved brother Wm. M'Kendree to the office of a bishop or superintendent, and he has entered upon the duties of the office. Our venerable Asbury is yet spared among us, and, although he bears the weight of more than threescore years, he is able to travel and visit all the annual conferences. May his life be long preserved for God's glory, and the service of his church!

"We have, upon the whole, had great peace, harmony, and unity, during our sitting in General Conference: we expect to close in a few days; and we trust in God that all things will work together for the divine glory and the promotion of the blessed work of religion.

"Our next General Conference is to be May 1st, 1812, in New-York, and is to be composed of a select number, of one for every five members belonging to the annual conferences respectively.

"We judge it proper to inform you, that our brother Ezekiel Cooper has voluntarily resigned his office as editor and general book steward. It was the wish and desire of the General Conference, that he should continue to serve the connection in that important department; but he has given us a final answer, that he declines the appointment, and wishes another to be appointed to take his place. The conference have accordingly accepted his resignation, and voted their thanks to him for the great services he has rendered them, in that department, for nine years past; and they have also voted their full approbation of his conduct in the management of the book

business, greatly to the advancement of that concern, and to the benefit of the connection.

"We have now chosen our brethren John Wilson and Daniel Hitt, the editors and general book stewards, who are to carry on the business in New-York as usual. You will therefore consider and understand, that our brother Ezekiel Cooper, of his own voluntary choice, has resigned, and is released from any responsibility in any accounts you may have with the Book Concern; and that all your accounts and business with that department or the agents thereof are to be transferred to and done with the said John Wilson and Daniel Hitt in future.

"We have had a glorious work in various parts; we had an addition last year of 7,405; our connection now amounts to more than 150,000. Surely the Lord is with us.

"We hope, dear brother, that you will bear us in mind before the throne of grace. We shall certainly pray for our brother Dr. Coke, his beloved wife, and all our European brethren. May the Lord long preserve your life, and bless you with every necessary favor of Providence and grace to complete your felicity in time and through eternity!

"We are, very dear and much-respected brother, yours affectionately in the bonds of the gospel and unity of the Spirit of grace.

"*Signed in behalf and by order of the General Conference.*"

The following resolutions also passed the conference in relation to his case:—

"The committee to whom was referred the case of Dr. Coke, taking into consideration the circumstances of the case, as it respects the request of the British Conference, the relative situation of the doctor, and the most prudent measures for us to adopt, in order to promote and perpetu-

ate a good understanding and Christian unity between us and our European brethren, are of opinion we should comply with the request made in the address of the British Conference for the doctor's continuance with them; and also, that we should respectfully retain the doctor's name in our minutes, agreeably to his request in his second proposition on that head—therefore, your committee report the following resolutions:—

"1. *Resolved*, That the General Conference do agree and consent that Dr. Coke may continue in Europe '*till he be called to the United States by the General Conference, or by all the annual conferences respectively.*'

"2. *Resolved*, That we do retain a grateful remembrance of the services and labors of Dr. Coke among us; and that the thanks of this conference are hereby acknowledged to him, and to God, for all his labors of love toward us, from the time he first left his native country to serve us.

"3. *Resolved*, That Dr. Coke's name shall be retained on our minutes after the names of the bishops, in a 'N. B. *Dr. Coke, at the request of the British Conference, and by consent of our General Conference, resides in Europe:* he is not to exercise the office of superintendent or bishop among us in the United States, until he be recalled by the General Conference, or by all the annual conferences respectively.'

"4. *Resolved*, That the committee of correspondence be, and are hereby directed, to draft two letters, one to the British Conference, the other to Dr. Coke, in answer to their respective letters to us; and therein communicating to them respectively the contents of the above resolutions.'

The following address, referred to in the letter above inserted, of the British to the American Methodist General Conference, will show the state of

feeling existing between the two bodies, and the earnest desire the former had for the continued services of Dr. Coke :—

"VERY DEAR BRETHREN IN THE LORD :—The pleasing account you gave us, in your last address, of the prosperity of religion in the United States, calls on us for the most lively expressions of thankfulness to God, who has so wonderfully displayed his love among you; the more so, as we have heard, by very recent accounts, that the operations of divine grace are continued, with increasing effect, on the hearts of thousands in your highly-favored country. May the Lord still prosper his blessed work, till the whole earth is filled with his glory!

"While we ascribe all the good that is done to God alone, as the sole fountain of light and life, we do not forget the instruments which it pleased him to employ. The names of Asbury and Whatcoat are mentioned in our assemblies with the greatest respect and affection. Mr. Whatcoat, we are informed, is called to his eternal reward. This is, doubtless, a very great loss to you, though to him an unspeakable gain. Yet, you well know, that the glorious Head of the church, who saw good to remove him, can supply his place with a pastor after his own heart, equally qualified to superintend his mourning flock. The venerable Mr. Asbury, whose praise is in all the churches, is still with you,—a burning and a shining light. We never lose sight of the zeal he showed for the salvation of souls, at the hazard of his life, during the war on the continent, when all others forsook it and fled. To speak our sentiments on this subject, might pain his mind; we therefore restrain ourselves, being well assured that he needs no encomiums of ours to recommend him to you! May his last days be crowned with increasing success in his great ministerial labors!

"Respecting our union, dear brethren, we think of no separation from you, save the great Atlantic. Our doctrine, and manner of spreading the gospel, are the same, and we mutually rejoice in each other's welfare. On this principle, we conclude, that you will greatly rejoice to hear of the flourishing state of vital godliness among us. In this kingdom, so long distinguished by every privilege congenial to real religion, there has been this year an increase of above seven thousand members to our Society, and near a thousand in Ireland, where the missionaries have been greatly blest in their arduous undertaking, particularly in weakening the destructive influence of the man of sin, and, we trust, in hastening the total overthrow of idolatry and superstition.

"What you have said concerning our present worthy secretary, the Rev. Dr. Coke, is no matter of wonder to us, who have long known his value, the honor which our Lord has put upon him, and have enjoyed the fruit of his labor. By a vote of our conference this day, he was requested to continue with us, in case his engagements with you, which he has repeatedly stated to us, should admit of it.

"Our conference has been numerous, and many important subjects have been brought before us; but, thanks be to God, we have been graciously preserved from the evil one, and are drawing toward a conclusion in the utmost harmony and love.

"That the eternal God may be your refuge, and the everlasting arms be underneath you; and that the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush may be ever manifested among you, is the earnest prayer of, very dear brethren, yours, in endless love.

"*Signed, in behalf of the conference,*

"JOHN BARBER, *President.*

"*Liverpool, August* 11, 1807."

The answer of the General Conference to this is as follows :—

"*Baltimore, 25th May*, 1808.

"VERY DEAR BRETHREN AND FATHERS IN CHRIST :—Your very affectionate address 'to the Methodist General Conference in America,' has been read in our conference, and afforded us great consolation. Feeling with you that 'our doctrine and manner of spreading the gospel are the same,' that we are united under one glorious Head, suffering in the same cause, and traveling to the same world of rest, we cannot but rejoice in your prosperity. Yes, brethren, we rejoice to hear that the great Head of the church has owned your labors, and given hundreds and thousands of precious souls to your labors and prayers. But above all, we feel constrained to return thanks to the Father of lights for presiding over your conference, and enabling you to draw to a close in harmony and love ; and again to go out into the hedges and highways, the towns and cities, and lift up your united voice for the recovery of a lost and sinking world. O brethren, if God so wonderfully owned and blest the labors of the few that first engaged in spreading the gospel on the itinerant plan in your highly-favored land, so that 'a little one has become a thousand,' what may we not expect from the labors of hundreds and thousands, provided they continue equally pure in doctrine, holy in life, and zealous for the glory of the Redeemer's kingdom ?

"We also, in this highly-favored country, have cause of unceasing gratitude and love to our common Lord, for his boundless love toward us. Although we have had a vast extent of country to travel over, in many parts stupendous chains of rocky mountains to climb, and uncultivated regions to explore, yet hitherto we have been kept *one ;* and our labors have been crowned with success beyond our most sanguine expectations. Not only in our towns and

populous cities, and the country adjacent to the Atlantic, have we seen the pleasure of the Lord prosper in our hand; but also to the westward beyond the river Ohio, to the Mississippi and the Missouri, we have seen the travail of the Redeemer's soul coming home to God. In those places where but a few years ago the wild beast of the forest prowled after his prey, and the tawny savage lurked in wait to murder the innocent, now houses are raised for the worship of God, precious souls have been converted by hundreds and thousands, and the songs of Zion are heard. Truly the wilderness and the solitary place have become glad, and the desert blossoms as the rose. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

"Our numbers are still increasing; we added more than even thousand members to our societies the last year. There are now upward of one hundred and fifty thousand members within the bounds of our charge. The prospects are still opening and pleasing. The fields are white unto the harvest. Our missionaries in the interior and upon the frontier have been successful. But we wish to rejoice with trembling. All the honor and praise be ascribed to God for ever.

"Your request for the continuance of our beloved brother Dr. Coke among you has been taken into the most serious and solemn deliberation in our conference; and in compliance with your request, a vote has passed that he may continue with you until he may be called to us by all the annual conferences respectively, or the General Conference. We are, however, not insensible of his value, or ungrateful for his past labors of love. And we do sincerely pray that the everlasting God may still be with him, and make him a blessing to hundreds and thousands of immortal souls.

"Our venerable father, Mr. Asbury, is still spared to us; and notwithstanding he carries the weight of threescore and three years, he has been enabled regularly to visit all

the annual conferences, and to preside in our General Conference. We esteem this a peculiar blessing.

"As the pious Whatcoat is taken from us to his eternal reward, we have elected and set apart our beloved brother William McKendree, who has been well tried and found faithful in the work of the ministry nearly twenty years, to fill his place as joint superintendent with Mr. Asbury. And we hope that the mantle of Elijah will rest upon Elisha. Our conference has been large, and business of the greatest importance has come before us; but through the infinite goodness of God we have been preserved in union, and are now drawing toward a close in harmony and love.

"Respecting our union, brethren, we can say with you, we know no separation save the Atlantic. And we wish, so far as circumstances will permit, ever to cultivate the most cordial affection.

"And now, dear brethren and fathers, praying that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may be your guide and support in life and death, and that we may all meet in our Father's house above, we remain yours, in unceasing love.

"*Signed by order and in behalf of the conference.*"*

As a variety of conflicting commentaries have been made on these proceedings, and especially upon the letters of Dr. Coke, some of them discreditable to his character, and others to the character of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it seems proper to subjoin a few remarks, with a view to set the matter in a just point of light, referring the reader, for a more full vindication of those transactions, to the book entitled,

* The proper signatures are wanting in the copies whence the above letters are taken.

"An Original Church of Christ," and to the "Defence of our Fathers." Let it be remembered then,

1. That the letter of Dr. Coke to Bishop White was his own simply, for which no one is responsible but himself, for he consulted not the General Conference at all, nor even Bishop Asbury or Mr. Wesley. Nay, it appears from the letter itself that Dr. Coke was fully sensible that Bishop Asbury would be averse to the plan of a union between the two Churches. If, therefore, there be any thing reprehensible in the letter or in the plan proposed, neither the Methodist Episcopal Church, Bishop Asbury, nor Mr. Wesley is to be held responsible for it, as neither the one nor the other was at all consenting to the proposition. But,

2. It seems that Dr. Coke himself designed his letter only as preparatory to an interview on the subject with Bishop White, should the proposition be favorably viewed by the latter. It was, therefore, purely a confidential communication from one friend to another, the writer requesting Bishop White to burn the letter in case he should not view the subject favorably; and even if he should, the preliminaries were to be discussed afterward, and the whole subject submitted to the General Conference, whose negative would have nullified the entire proceedings. The letter, therefore, should be considered only as an incipient step towards a union which the writer greatly desired as a means, according to his judgment at the time, of realizing a greater amount of good than could be in their separate action. If, therefore, the end proposed could have been realized without any sacrifice of principle, or the use of unlawful means, it might have been sanctioned by all good men

in each communion, without any impeachment of either motive or judgment. In the estimation of Bishop White himself, as appears from his answer to Dr. Coke, such a union might have been effected without any dereliction of duty on either side, provided the terms of the compact could have been made mutually agreeable. Futurity alone can fully declare whether the motive in making or rejecting the proposition were most in accordance with the Divine will, or most conducive to extensive and permanent good. In any, and in every event, the severe censures which have been cast upon Dr. Coke, and the unwarrantable conclusions respecting the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are not justified or sustained by the facts in the case, however much we may deprecate the making or rejecting the movements of either party in the premises.

3. The most weighty objection, however, to Dr. Coke, in making the proposal, is, that he thereby expressed a doubt of the validity of his own ordination, and of course of those on whom he had laid his hands. The reader is requested to notice that this objection has been raised by the Protestant Episcopalians, who consider presbyterial ordination invalid, and who profess a belief in the uninterrupted succession of a third order in the church, denominated bishops, made such by a triple consecration; but as this belief is founded upon no substantial proof, as such an order cannot be traced, nor therefore insisted upon as essential to constitute a valid ministry, the objection itself can have no solid foundation; more especially as Dr. Coke himself says expressly, in the above letter to the General Conference, that he had no confidence in

the doctrine of succession, and therefore considered his consecration by Wesley and others as perfectly valid.

But Dr. Coke's letter above quoted, sets this matter at rest by the most explicit avowal on this point. In whatever sense Bishop White might have understood him, it is manifest that Dr. Coke never meant to insinuate that his own ordination by Mr. Wesley, or that of those who had received it at his hands, was wanting in any thing to make it valid. This is a construction put upon the letter of Dr. Coke not authorized by the letter itself, and is expressly contradicted in the one he addressed to the General Conference.

4. But as before said, whatever error may have been committed in this affair, the Methodist Episcopal Church is not accountable for it. It is believed that Dr. Coke betrayed too much precipitancy in reference to this subject—that his great desire for extensive usefulness led him to make the proposal, which he did without due consideration—that before he thus committed himself to those who were watching him, with perhaps some jealousy, he should have consulted and obtained the consent of his worthy colleague, as well as Mr. Wesley's and the General Conference. It is, moreover, highly probable that Dr. Coke misunderstood the views of Mr. Wesley, when he told Bishop White that had he foreseen some things, he would not have gone so far. No other intimation, so far as I have been able to learn, was ever given that Mr. Wesley ever repented of what he had done for his American brethren. His last letter to Ezekiel Cooper, but a few days before his death, and the record he made in his journal in reference to this business, both prove

that Dr. Coke labored under a mistake when he said this. What Mr. Wesley said in regard to Mr. Asbury's calling himself a bishop, and to Cokesbury College, no more proves that he repented of what he had done, than it does that a father is sorry that he has a promising son, merely because he finds it necessary to chastise him for his good.

It should be observed that Dr. Coke does not say in his letter to Bishop White that he had *authority* from Mr. Wesley to say that the latter regretted the steps he had taken in the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but gives it as his opinion only that such were Mr. Wesley's views and feelings.

The fact is, Dr. Coke had become alarmed—unnecessarily so, as subsequent events proved—from the disposition manifested by O'Kelly and his partizans, fearing that a convulsion would take place in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that they would become scattered abroad. To prevent such a calamity, Bishop Asbury proposed the council, which had but an ephemeral existence, and did not answer the design of its institution, to which neither Dr. Coke nor O'Kelly was agreed, the former submitting to it from deference to Bishop Asbury, proposing in the mean time a General Conference as a substitute, which was brought about in 1792, at which time O'Kelly withdrew.

Under these alarming apprehensions for the safety of the church, Dr. Coke made the proposition for a union with the Protestant Episcopal Church, from a hope of enlarging the sphere of usefulness for his Methodist brethren, by creating a concentration of action for the ministry of both communions, and thereby inspiring more public confidence in the cementing

principles of Christianity and the stability of its institutions. As, however, his fears were groundless, so the union proposed was both impolitic and unnecessary, as he himself lived to see and acknowledge.

It is hoped, therefore, that we may hear no more of the doubts of Dr. Coke respecting the validity of his ordination. And whatever errors he may have committed in this affair, let them find an apology in that common frailty of human nature from which none is exempt—the imperfection of human judgment—and be buried in the same tomb in which the remains are deposited which once shrouded a spirit of no common mould—a spirit actuated by the noblest principles of philanthropy, piety, and faith.

We claim not for Dr. Coke perfection or infallibility of judgment; but we do claim for him an unsullied reputation, a purity of motive, guiding and actuating an extended desire for usefulness to his fellow-men, and which a close and critical inspection of his character and conduct makes to shine out with increased lustre and a more enduring brightness. And if the same amount of goodness can be awarded to those who have made this vindication necessary—if the same apology for merely human weaknesses will serve to set off their virtues in the same conspicuous light—we shall rejoice in anticipating, by the abounding mercy of God in Christ Jesus, our eternal union with them all, in *ascribing honor and glory to Him who hath washed them and us in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God for ever and ever.*

There was another very important matter submitted to this General Conference. We have already seen in the preceding chapter, the efforts which were

made by Bishop Asbury and most of the annual conferences, to convene a delegated General Conference in 1807, but that the measure was defeated by the vote of the Virginia conference. Not despairing of accomplishing an object so desirable in itself, the subject was presented to this General Conference in the following memorial:—

"VERY DEAR BRETHREN:—We are as one of the seven eyes of the great and increasing body of the Methodist Episcopal Church in these United States, which is composed of about five hundred traveling, and about two thousand local preachers, together with upwards of one hundred and forty thousand members; these, (with our numerous congregations and families, spread over an extent of country more than two thousand miles from one end to the other, amounting, in all probability, to more than one million of souls, which are, directly or remotely, under our pastoral oversight and ministerial charge,) should engage our most sacred attention, and should call into exertion all the wisdom and talents we are possessed of, to perpetuate the unity and prosperity of the whole connection, and to establish such regulations, rules, and form of government, as may, by the blessing of God in Jesus Christ, promote that cause of religion which is more precious to us than riches, honor, or life itself, and be conducive to the salvation of souls, among the generations yet unborn. The fields are white unto harvest before us, and the opening prospect of the great day of glory brightens continually in our view, and we are looking forward with hopeful expectations for the universal spread of scriptural truth and holiness over the habitable globe. Brethren, for what have we labored—for what have we suffered—for what have we borne the reproach of Christ, with much long-suffering, with tears and sorrow—but to serve the great end and eternal purpose

of the grace of God, in the present and everlasting felicity of immortal souls ?

"When we take a serious and impartial view of this important subject, and consider the extent of our connection, the number of our preachers, the great inconvenience, expense, and loss of time, that must necessarily result from our present regulations relative to our General Conferences, we are deeply impressed with a thorough conviction that a representative or delegated General Conference, composed of a specific number, on principles of equal representation, from the several annual conferences, would be much more conducive to the prosperity and general unity of the whole body, than the present indefinite and numerous body of ministers, collected together unequally from the various conferences to the great inconvenience of the ministry, and injury of the work of God.

"We therefore present unto you this memorial, requesting that you will adopt the principle of an equal representation from the annual conferences, to form in future a delegated General Conference, and that you will establish such rules and regulations as are necessary to carry the same into effect.

"As we are persuaded that our brethren in general, from a view of the situation and circumstances of the connection, must be convinced, upon mature and impartial reflection, of the propriety and necessity of the measure, we forbear to enumerate the various reasons and arguments which might be urged in support of it. But we do hereby instruct, advise, and request every member who shall go from our conference to the General Conference, to urge, if necessary, every reason and argument in favor of the principle, and to use all their christian influence to have the same adopted and carried into effect.

"And we also shall and do invite and request our brethren in the several annual conferences which are to sit be-

tween this and the General Conference, to join and unite with us in the subject matter of this memorial. We do hereby candidly and openly express our opinion and wish, with the firmest attachment to the unity and prosperity of the connection; hoping and praying that our chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ, may direct you in all wisdom, righteousness, brotherly love, and Christian unity.

"We are, dear brethren, in the bonds of gospel ties, most affectionately yours, &c.

"*By order and in behalf of the New-York conference, without a dissenting vote.*

"(Signed) FRANCIS WARD, *Sec'y.*

"*Coeyman's Patent, May the 7th*, 1807."

This memorial, it seems, had been submitted to several of the annual conferences, and concurred in, as appears by the record, by the New England, Ohio, and South Carolina conferences; and, accordingly, it had been requested, that as full a representation as practicable, should attend the present session of the General Conference, that a full expression of the voice of the several annual conferences should be heard in regard to this measure.

After the memorial was read, it was referred to a committee of two members from each annual conference, chosen by the representatives of each conference from among themselves; and the following members composed the committee:—

New-York Conference—Ezekiel Cooper, John Wilson; New-England do., George Pickering, Joshua Soule; Western do., William M'Kendree, William Burke; South Carolina do., William Phœbus, Josias Randle; Virginia do., Philip Bruce, Jesse Lee; Bal-

timore do., Stephen G. Roszell, Nelson Reed; Philadelphia do., John M'Claskey, Thomas Ware.

On Monday, the 16th, the committee presented the following report, which, after a long debate, was rejected by a vote of 57 for and 64 against it:—

"Whereas, it is of the greatest importance that the doctrine, form of government, and general rules of the United Societies in America be preserved sacred and inviolable: and whereas every prudent measure should be taken to preserve, strengthen, and perpetuate the union of the connection:—

"Therefore, your committee, upon mature deliberation, have thought it advisable that the third section of the form of Discipline shall be as follows, viz:—

"SECTION III.

"*Of the General Conference.*

"1. The General Conference shall be composed of delegates from the annual conferences.

"2. The delegates shall be chosen by ballot without debate, in the annual conferences respectively, in the last meeting of conference previous to the sitting of the General Conference.

"3. Each annual conference respectively shall have a right to send seven elders, members of their conference, as delegates to the General Conference.

"4. Each annual conference shall have a right to send one delegate in addition to the seven, for every ten members belonging to such conference, over and above fifty, so that if there be sixty members they shall send eight; if seventy, they shall send nine, and so on in proportion.

"5. The General Conference shall meet on the first day of May, in the year of our Lord 1812; and thenceforward on the first day of May, once in four years perpetually, at

such place or places as shall be fixed on by the General Conference from time to time.

"6. At all times when the General Conference is met, it shall take two thirds of the whole number of delegates to form a quorum.

"7. One of the general superintendents shall preside in the General Conference; but in case no general superintendent be present, the General Conference shall choose a president pro tem.

"8. The General Conference shall have full powers to make rules, regulations, and canons for our church, under the following limitations and restrictions, viz:

"The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our articles of religion; nor establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

"They shall not lessen the number of seven delegates from each annual conference, nor allow of a greater number from any annual conference than is provided for in the fourth paragraph of this section.

"They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government, so as to do away episcopacy, or to destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

"They shall not revoke or change the general rules of the United Societies.

"They shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of trial by a committee, and of an appeal.

"Neither shall they appropriate the produce of the Book Concern, or of the Charter Fund, to any purpose other than for the benefit of the traveling, superannuated, supernumerary and worn out preachers, their wives, widows, and children.

"Provided, nevertheless, that upon the joint recommendation of all the annual conferences, then a majority of two thirds of the General Conference succeeding, shall suffice to alter any of the above restrictions."

After discussing this report for one whole day, it was, by a vote of the conference, postponed until the reconsideration of the question respecting the manner in which the presiding elders should thereafter be appointed. After it was decided that they should continue to be appointed as heretofore by the bishops, on Wednesday the 18th, the consideration of the report was resumed, and after some debate the entire report was, as before stated, rejected by a majority of seven votes.

The rejection of this report was a source of much regret and disappointment to most of the older preachers who were present, and particularly to Bishop Asbury, as they clearly saw the necessity of adopting some plan by which the doctrines of the church, its form of government, and its general rules, might be preserved from deterioration, and also by which a more equal representation from the several annual conferences should be secured. These things led to further consultation upon the subject, and it issued finally in the adoption, almost unanimously, of the following regulations and limitations:—

"*Q.* Who shall compose the General Conference, and what are the regulations and powers belonging to it?

"*A.* 1. The General Conference shall be composed of one member for every five members of each annual conference, to be appointed by seniority or choice, at the discretion of such annual conference; yet so that such representatives shall have traveled four full calendar years from the time they were received on trial by an annual conference, and are in full connection at the time of holding the conference.

"2. The General Conference shall meet on the first day of May, in the year of our Lord 1812, in the city of New-York, and thenceforward on the first day of May once in four years perpetually, in such place or places as shall be fixed by the General Conference from time to time; but the general superintendents, with or by the advice of all the annual conferences, or, if there be no general superintendents, all the annual conferences respectively, shall have power to call a General Conference, if they judge it necessary, at any time.

"3. At all times when the General Conference is met, it shall take two thirds of the representatives of all the annual conferences to make a quorum for the transacting of business.

"4. One of the general superintendents shall preside in the General Conference; but in case no general superintendent be present, the General Conference shall choose a president *pro tempore*.

"5. The General Conference shall have full powers to make rules and regulations for our Church, under the following limitations and restrictions, viz.:

"1. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, or change our Articles of Religion, nor establish any new standards or rules of doctrine, contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine.

"2. They shall not allow of more than one representative for every five members of the annual conference, nor allow of a less number than one for every seven.

"3. They shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government, so as to do away episcopacy, or to destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

"4. They shall not revoke or change the general rules of the United Societies.

"5. They shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of a trial by a committee, and of an ap-

peal; neither shall they do away the privileges of our members of trial before the society or by a select number, and of an appeal.

"6. They shall not appropriate the produce of the Book Concern or of the Charter Fund to any purpose other than for the benefit of the traveling, supernumerary, superannuated, and worn out preachers, their wives, widows, and children.

"7. Provided, nevertheless, that, upon the joint recommendation of all the annual conferences, then a majority of two-thirds of the General Conference succeeding, shall suffice to alter any of the above resolutions."

The unanimity with which these restrictive regulations were adopted by the conference, shows the deep sense which was very generally felt of the propriety of limiting the powers of the General Conference, so as to secure for ever the essential doctrines of Christianity from all encroachments, as well as those rules of moral conduct, so succinctly and precisely embodied in the General Rules, and also to prevent the appropriations of the available funds of the church from being diverted to other objects than those for which they had been established. Call these rules, therefore, *restrictive regulations*, or a *constitution of the Church*—for we contend not about names merely—they have ever since been considered as sacredly binding upon all succeeding General Conferences, limiting them in all their legislative acts, and prohibiting them from making inroads upon the docrines, general rules, and government of the church.

Before this, each General Conference felt itself at full liberty, not being prohibited by any standing laws, to make whatever alterations it might see fit, or to in-

troduce any new doctrine or item in the Discipline, which either fancy, inclination, discretion, or indiscretion might dictate. Under this state of things, knowing the rage of man for novelty, and witnessing the destructive changes which have frequently laid waste churches, by removing ancient land-marks, and so modifying doctrines and usages as to suit the temper of the times, or to gratify either a corrupt taste or a perverse disposition, many had felt uneasy apprehensions for the safety and unity of the church, and the stability of its doctrines, moral discipline, and the frame of its government; and none were more solicitous upon this subject than Bishop Asbury, who had labored so long with an assiduity equalled by few, if indeed any, and suffered so much for the propagation and establishing of these important points; he therefore greatly desired, before he should be called hence, to see them fixed upon a permanent foundation. The lively satisfaction, too, with which this act of the conference was received generally, both by ministers and people, abundantly proves the wisdom which presided in that council which devised these resolutions, and applauds the prudence and caution with which they were so cordially adopted. And although the progress of events has dictated the expediency of some modification in the iron-like bond of the proviso, yet time and experience have borne a faithful testimony to the salutary influence of the restrictions themselves, on the peace and unity of the church.

The death of Bishop Whatcoat, and the absence of Dr. Coke, left Bishop Asbury alone in the superintendency. This was a burden, in the present enlarged state of the work, he was not able longer to

bear; and hence a resolution passed the conference on the twelfth day of its session, for the election and consecration of an additional bishop. Before, however, this motion prevailed, a motion for the election of seven additional bishops, one for each annual conference, with Bishop Asbury at their head, was largely and ably discussed by some of the leading members of the conference on each side. Those, however, who were in favor of this motion, were also in favor of either abolishing or greatly restricting the office of presiding elder, and making the episcopacy so large as in a great measure to supersede the necessity of that office. But as it was finally settled by a large majority of the conference, that this officer should be continued in the church, and likewise continue to be appointed by the bishop, so the motion for adding seven additional bishops, notwithstanding the plausibility with which the measure was urged upon the conference, was finally rejected by a strong vote.

It was then moved that two additional bishops be elected and consecrated. This also, after a free interchange of views, was decided in the negative, when the resolution in favor of one was adopted almost unanimously. The next question to be decided, was, who should be the man.

On the same day on which the resolution passed, the conference proceeded to the election by ballot, and on counting the votes, it was found that out of 128, the number of members present, *William M'Kendree* had 95 in his favor,* and was therefore declared

* I do not find on the journal of the conference any record of the names of those for whom the others voted, but I believe they were divided between Ezekiel Cooper and Jesse Lee, the former having 28 votes in his favor.

to be duly elected; and on the 17th of May, 1808, he was consecrated in the Light-street church by Bishop Asbury, assisted by the Rev. Messrs. Freeborn Garrettson, Philip Bruce, Jesse Lee, and Thomas Ware.

Mr. M'Kendree had been commended to the attention and approbation of the conference, by a long, laborious, and faithful service in the itinerant field of labor, during which time God had set his seal to his ministry in a most remarkable manner.

William M'Kendree was born of reputable parents, in King William county, in the State of Virginia, on the 6th day of July, 1757, and was educated in the Church of England. In the year 1787, in the 30th year of his age, under the ministry of the Rev. John Easter, Mr. M'Kendree was awakened to a sense of his lost condition, and thence led to seek and obtain an interest in the atoning blood of Christ. Impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for the salvation of souls, he was led into the "ministry of reconciliation," and in 1788 was received on trial in the Virginia conference. He soon gave evidence of great ardor of mind in the cause of God, and of superior abilities as a preacher of the gospel.

In the great agitation which was produced by the conduct of O'Kelly and his partisans, his mind became for a short season greatly perplexed with the controversy which arose out of the questions which were then mooted, and, fearing that the course taken by the conference might prove injurious to the cause of religion, he declined taking a regular appointment for that year. He was, however, soon convinced of his error, and, at the request of the bishop, was sta-

tioned in Norfolk, Va., in 1793. These things led him to a more critical inquiry into those points of controversy then agitated, and the result was a more thorough conviction than ever of the scriptural character of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and of his duty to adhere to it with firmness and fidelity, which he did to the end of his life.

In 1796 he was appointed to the charge of a district in the Virginia conference, which trust he fulfilled with great fidelity and success for three years, when he was removed to the Baltimore district, over which he presided one year with great dignity and usefulness, laboring with assiduity to spread "the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins."

At the end of this term he was selected by Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat, who were going on their tour to the western country, to take charge of the district which then comprehended the whole of the western conference. Here he had to travel about fifteen hundred miles every three months, in order to pass around and through his district. He entered upon this new field of labor with that enlightened zeal which had heretofore distinguished him, and was the happy and honored instrument of extending the Redeemer's kingdom far into these new settlements, in some parts of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio. While here, the camp-meetings commenced, before described, which were instrumental in promoting the extensive revivals of religion with which those parts of the country were so highly favored. Into this work he entered with all his soul, traveling and preaching through the settlements, and was everywhere hailed as a messenger of God. Here he was instrumental, in connection

with those associated with him in this good work, in laying the foundation of that living temple which has been erected in that country.

It was from this field of labor that Mr. M'Kendree came to the General Conference in 1808. And such was the confidence inspired in his wisdom and integrity, in his zeal and prudence in promoting the cause of God, and such a halo of glory seemed to surround his character, that the finger of Providence appeared to point to him as the most suitable person to fill the office of a superintendent.

Though personally unknown to most of the younger members of the conference, yet a sermon which he delivered in the Light-street church on the Sabbath morning previously to the day of his election, had such an effect on the minds of all present, that they seemed to say, with one accord, "This is the man of our choice, whom God hath appointed to rule over us." He was accordingly elected and consecrated as before related; and his subsequent life and conduct prove that the choice fell upon the right man, though his administration was often subjected to the severest test and most critical scrutiny.

At this conference, Ezekiel Cooper resigned his station as editor and general book steward, and John Wilson and Daniel Hitt, the former having served four years as the assistant of Mr. Cooper, were elected to fill the station. A rule also passed the conference prohibiting any one to serve in this office more than eight years successively.

The following regulation was adopted in respect to the election and consecration of local preachers to the office of deacons:—

"The bishops have obtained liberty, by the suffrages of the conference, to ordain local preachers to the office of deacons, provided their characters pass in examination, and obtain the approbation of the yearly conference, with a testimonial from the quarterly meeting of their respective circuits, after proper examination, signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary."

The following rules respecting raising supplies were adopted:—

"Every annual conference has full liberty to adopt and recommend such plans and rules as to them may appear necessary, the more effectually to raise supplies for the respective allowances.

"If the respective allowances are not raised, as provided for, the connection shall not be accountable for the deficiency, as in case of debt."

The section respecting the trial and expulsion of members for a delinquency in the payment of debts, and other disputes, was so amended as to allow a legal process when it is judged the case is such as to require it.

In the question respecting permitting "strangers" at the meeting of the class and society, the word "strangers" was exchanged for the words, "those who are not of our society," so as to read, "How often shall we permit those who are not of our society to meet in class or society?"

After these transactions, together with a few verbal alterations in some sections of the Discipline, which do not much affect the sense, on the 26th day of the month the conference adjourned, never more to meet under the same circumstances, as hereafter the con

ference was to be composed of delegates chosen by the respective annual conferences.

In conformity to the resolution of the conference in relation to Dr. Coke, the following was inserted in the minutes:—

"Dr. Coke, at the request of the British Conference, and by consent of our General Conference, resides in Europe. He is not to exercise the office of superintendent among us in the United States, until he be recalled by the General Conference, or by all the annual conferences respectively."

From this period, therefore, Dr. Coke resided in Europe, until he commenced the missionary voyage to Asia, in which he fell a martyr to his work, in the midst of the Indian ocean, where he was entombed beneath its coral sands, until the last trumpet shall bid his "sleeping dust" awake to everlasting life and glory.

CHAPTER VIII.

From the close of the General Conference of 1808, to the commencement of the General Conference of 1812.

1808. THERE were no additional conferences created this year, the whole of the work in the United States and Territories, as well as in Upper and Lower Canada, being comprehended in the seven already existing.

It appears that both preachers and people were generally satisfied with what had been done by the last General Conference, and the experience of thirty

years has abundantly tested the wisdom of the plan of securing an equal representation from the several annual conferences, acting, when together, under the limitations which that conference saw fit to impose. The preachers, therefore, went to their several stations with hearts burning with love to their fellow-men, and a determination to devote themselves entirely to their peculiar work. And though but few new circuits were added this year, yet the work of God gradually increased and spread among the people, both in the old and new countries.

Bishop Asbury felt himself greatly relieved from the burden of responsibility resting upon him as the sole superintendent, by the active and diligent manner in which the newly elected and consecrated bishop entered upon the labors of his office :—"The burden," he remarks, "is now borne by two pair of shoulders instead of one—the care is cast upon two hearts and heads." He, however, by no means remitted any of his labors, but with the same characteristic ardor and diligence, we find him moving through the general work, giving tone to the spirit of reformation which was now pervading different portions of the country, par ticularly through the agency of camp-meetings. Hence we find him this year, in company with Bishop M'Kendree, after passing through some of the older settlements of Pennsylvania, crossing the mountains and descending into the valley of the Mississippi; and notwithstanding the growing infirmities of body under which he often groaned, he visited several of their camp-meetings, and preached to the people, exhorting them to steadfastness in the faith.

While here he had an opportunity of manifesting

the tender sensibilities of his soul over the grave of one of his departed friends. Passing by the grave, he says :—

"It was as much as I could do to forbear weeping as I mused over her speaking grave. How sweetly eloquent! Ah! the world knows little of my sorrows—little knows how dear to me are my many friends, and how deeply I feel their loss. But they all die in the Lord, and this shall comfort me."

His colleague, Bishop M'Kendree, also entered upon his work with equal diligence, making the entire circuit of the continent from year to year. One reason assigned by Bishop Asbury why it became him to visit, as nearly as practicable, every part of the work was, that the preachers and people ought to know their bishop, and that he ought to know them, so as to be able to sympathize with them in their wants and sufferings, to understand their true state, as well as to set an example to all which they might safely and profitably imitate. Hence, while in the western country, he says, "I feel for the people of this territory; but we must suffer with them if we expect to feel for them as we ought; and here are the disadvantages of a local episcopacy, because it cannot be interested for its charge as it should be, because it sees not, suffers not with, and therefore feels not for the people." And therefore for the first year of Bishop M'Kendree's episcopal labors, his father in the gospel led him around from one part of the work to another, introduced him to the conferences, and made him acquainted, as far as possible, with the people of his charge. And what a charge! To travel

from Georgia to Maine, from thence through Vermont and along the lakes into the western states, following the waters of the Ohio, the Mississippi, the Tennessee and the Cumberland rivers, ascending the hills and crossing the intervening valleys, lodging sometimes in log huts, and not unfrequently in the woods, attending the conferences, preaching almost every day, receiving visiters, writing letters, and hearing the grievances of discontented individuals! This was *labor!* and labor, too, actually performed by those who were at that time honored with presiding over the Methodist Episcopal Church. And does the reader wish to hear *how* such travels and labors were performed? Let Bishop Asbury answer. Speaking of his departure from a camp-meeting which he and Bishop M'Kendree had attended in Tennessee, he says:—

"The right way to improve a short day is to stop only to feed the horses; and let the riders, meanwhile, take a bite of what they may have been provident enough to put into their pockets."

As they thus moved around from one annual conference to another, Bishop Asbury could direct the attention of his colleague to the fields which had been sown by those who had already cultivated the ground.

Take another extract from his journal for this year, as an instance of the mode in which they traveled, and of the feelings which were inspired under these things, and the prospects before them. They were now in the state of Georgia, having crossed the mountains from Tennessee and arrived among the older settlements. While here he says:—

"My flesh sinks under labor. We are riding in a poor thirty dollar chaise, in partnership, two bishops of us, but it must be confessed that it tallies well with the weight of our purses. What bishops! Well—but we have great news, and we have great times, and each western, southern, and the Virginia conference will have one thousand souls truly converted to God. Is not this an equivalent for a light purse? And are we not well paid for starving and toil? Yes, glory to God!"

This, indeed, was the reward for which he looked, for it may surprise some readers to know that the salary of these bishops amounted to the enormous sum of eighty dollars a year, besides their traveling expenses. Yet this is the fact, and from this pittance they had to supply themselves with clothes and traveling apparatus. Hence he refers in the above extract, to the "weight of their purses."

While, however, they were, in some places, called upon to suffer these privations, yet, in other places, they knew "how to abound, having all things" needful for temporal comfort, surrounded by the kindest friends, and comforted by their unaffected greetings of friendship. Under these circumstances, they poured out their hearts in grateful acknowledgments to God for his goodness in raising them up friends to comfort them and administer to their wants, at the same time expressing a fear lest those abundant marks of favor should make them forget their dependence on God, or neglect him as the "Giver of every good and perfect gift." But whether in want or abounding in plenty, they went on their way, rejoicing in all the good things which the Lord was doing for the people, and contributing by their preaching and example to invite all their brethren to diligence and

perseverance in their respective spheres of labor. This was an efficient general superintendency, worthy of the name, and answering the end of its institution.

Among other places, the new settlements in some portions of the state of Ohio were this year visited with outpourings of the Divine Spirit. We have already noticed the influence which the camp-meetings exerted on the inhabitants of that country, and that their continuance, freed from the wild irregularities which had rendered them suspicious in some places, was a means of diffusing the spirit of reformation and of sound piety through the settlements. Along the banks of Paint Creek and the Great Miami, the work flourished greatly during this and several subsequent years, so that, as before stated, in the month of September, 1807, an annual conference was held in Chilicothe, and another in 1809.

This year was distinguished by a very considerable revival of religion in the Mad river country. Among others who were made partakers of divine grace, was a Mr. *Kenton*, who was one of the first adventurers into the wilderness of Kentucky and Ohio, and had been a companion of the celebrated *Boone*, the hardy pioneer into Kentucky. Kenton, after living for some time near Maysville in Kentucky, finally settled on the banks of Mad river. He had often displayed the most intrepid courage in contending with the savages of the wilderness, in conquering and slaying the wild beasts of the forest, and enduring all those hardships which are incident to the life of a rover through the western woods and prairies. And though once or twice taken a prisoner by the savages, yet such was his vigilance and fearlessness, that he escaped from

their grasp, and survived all the perils of a hunter's life. Yet this haughty lord of the forest fell before the "sword of the spirit which is the word of God." He who had fled from the face of civilization, and more than once moved his residence to avoid coming in contact with his white neighbors who were settling around him, was at length caught in the Gospel net, and brought a willing captive to the Lord Jesus Christ.

About this time, a camp-meeting was held in his immediate neighborhood. Attracted by the fame of their character, and wishing to gratify a laudable curiosity, Kenton mingled with the crowd who attended the meeting, and listened with attention to the ambassadors of Christ. Light broke in upon his understanding, and conviction penetrated his conscience. He who had boldly grappled with the wild beasts of the forest, and fearlessly contended with ferocious Indians, was now seen to tremble and weep under the power of Gospel truth. After laboring some time in silence under the pressure of that guilt which he now felt preying upon his spirits, he asked and obtained an interview with the preacher, the Rev. Mr. Sale, to whom he unbosomed himself in the following strain:—

"Sir, I wish to open my mind to you freely, but must enjoin the most profound secrecy. I have been a wretched sinner; but the Lord has spared my life. I have been in so many battles, encountered so many dangers, so many times taken prisoner by the Indians—have run the gauntlet—have been taken into the woods by the Indians, stripped, and tied fast on the back of a wild colt, stretched and lashed fast with my hands under its flanks, my heels under its breast, and then let loose to the mercy of the wild ani-

mal, till some of my limbs were broken; and I at last miraculously escaped. I have been wounded so often, and encountered various other difficulties; but after all have been firm to my purpose and unshaken in my resolutions and determinations. And now, sir, by the help of God, I am determined to get religion and serve the Lord. Do you think, sir, I will ever give it up?"

After an interchange of some thoughts in reference to this momentous subject, and enjoining secrecy upon Mr. Sale, they returned to the encampment. That night the general—for such was his title—was in great agony of mind, and was earnestly engaged in seeking for redemption in the blood of Christ. The next morning he was heard proclaiming aloud himself, what he had the night before so solemnly requested to be kept a profound secret. He was declaring what God had done for his soul, and many praised God on his account.

Such a change, on such a man, could not but have a most powerful and salutary influence on the minds of others, especially as his subsequent life gave irrefutable evidence of the reality of the work. This is given as one specimen among hundreds which might be selected, in proof of the good effects of these meetings.

In the south-western part of the country a new circuit was formed along the banks of the *Tombigbee* river, by the labors of *Matthew P. Sturdevant.* This being a new and thinly settled country, the preacher was subjected to those difficulties and hardships which were inseparable from the mode of life adopted by the Methodist itinerants of those days. He succeeded, however, in forming a circuit, so that in 1810 we find,

on the minutes of conference for Tombigbee, eighty-six members—seventy-one whites, and fifteen colored.

In New-England the work of God had slowly progressed in several places, and this year *Smithfield* and *Palmyra* circuits were added to those heretofore formed. The latter was in the Kennebeck district, much of which embraced the newly settled countries in the province of Maine. Through the labors of such men as the *Rev. Messrs. Elijah Hedding, Joshua Soule, Thomas Branch, John Broadhead, Elijah R. Sabin*, and *Oliver Beale*, who were this year the presiding elders in the New-England conference, Methodism was gradually, and in some places powerfully, advancing, both in the older and in some of the new settlements in the New-England states. While Thomas Branch was leading forward the young men under his care in the regions of Vermont, where Methodism now numbered about one thousand six hundred members, Elijah Hedding (now bishop) was equally indefatigable in exploring the settlements and villages among the hills and valleys of New-Hampshire; and the province of Maine was blessed with the labors of Joshua Soule (now bishop) and Oliver Beale, whose example in the work committed to their care, stimulated the preachers on their respective districts to activity and diligence in their respective spheres of labor.

But among those whose early labors were devoted to the salvation of the people in New-England, we must not forget to mention the name of *Rev. George Pickering*. As early as 1795 we find him stationed in Hartford, Connecticut; and, after filling the stations of New-London, Lynn, and Boston, he was appointed

a presiding elder in 1797, which office he filled for several terms, with the needful intervening years in stations, until age and infirmities obliged him to intermit his more extensive labors for those better suited to his declining years.

When Mr. Pickering entered this field, in 1793, there was but one district, which was then in charge of Jesse Lee, including eighteen circuits, twenty-six preachers, and two thousand two hundred and sixty members. At the time of which we are now speaking, there were six districts, fifty-four circuits, seventy-five preachers, and eight thousand eight hundred and twenty-five church members. Mr. Pickering, therefore, may be said, in some sense, to have grown up with the Methodist Episcopal Church in New-England, as he very soon followed Mr. Lee, and has ever since shared in its weal or wo, during all the vicissitudes through which it has passed in that part of our work; and he still lives to labor and rejoice with his brethren. And though the above number may appear small in comparison with most of the other conferences, yet it must be remembered that Methodism in that country had to contend with an opposition of a peculiar character, arising from the modes of thinking and habits of the people on religious subjects, and also that other churches were, in many instances, as much benefited by the labors of the Methodist ministry as were the Methodists themselves. Here, as well as in some other places, many who were awakened and converted to God by our ministry, were received into other communions, and a spirit of reformation, by this means, was diffused among the various evangelical denominations. These things are

mentioned not by way of complaint against others, but merely as matters of fact, for we rejoice in all that the Lord our God has done, or may do, by whatever instrumentality he may see fit to work.

While these things were going forward in the more exterior parts of the field of labor, God was not unmindful of the people in the cities and villages in the older states. In the city of New-York, the work of reformation continued with encouraging prosperity, and many were made partakers of the "grace of life." In the city of Philadelphia also, there was an outpouring of the Spirit upon the congregations, and quite a number was added to the church. Through the agency of camp-meetings many parts of the country were blessed, particularly on the eastern shore of Maryland, where hundreds of sinners were happily converted to God; and his people were made to rejoice abundantly in beholding these manifest displays of the mercy and love of God toward their fellow-men, as well as in their own enjoyment of the reviving influences of the Holy Spirit.

A remarkable work of God commenced this year in the penitentiary of Richmond, in Virginia, under the faithful labors of the Rev. Stith Mead, who undertook to carry the consolations of religion to those unhappy people. By preaching to them himself, and procuring the help of other ministers, and by circulating among them small religious books, their minds were led to consider their ways, a godly sorrow for sin was awakened in their hearts, and they were directed to look by faith to Jesus Christ for pardon and salvation. The result of this good work was, that in the course of a few months about thirty of these prisoners were formed

into a society, furnishing satisfactory evidence that they had "passed from death unto life."

Twenty-nine preachers were located this year, seven were returned supernumerary, seven superannuated, one had been expelled, and two, *John Richards**

* John Richards joined the Roman Catholics. When the writer of this history was stationed in Montreal in 1807—having been changed by the presiding elder from Niagara to Montreal—Mr. Richards came there with a special recommendation from Bishop Asbury as a missionary. He was received with cordiality, and preached in our house with acceptance, and gave great satisfaction to the people. After being there about two weeks, at his request he was introduced to a Catholic priest in Montreal, and afterward visited him nearly every day, without any suspicion being entertained of an intention on his part to leave us. At length, from various conversations had with the writer and several other members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which Mr. Richards pleaded the cause of the Roman Church, suspicions became rife that he was a Catholic, and great anxiety in the little society was felt on his account.

Within a few days after this became public, our doubts were all dissipated by receiving from him a written Protest against the Methodist Societies, as a "continuation of an ancient heresy which had long afflicted the church," declaring that he withdrew all connection with them, but that he should carry with him "into the bosom of the holy church a sincere regard for their welfare, and prayers for their salvation." After passing through the preliminary steps, he became, in a very short time, a priest in the Roman Catholic communion, and remains such to the present time. The reasons for this step remain unexplained, as Mr. R. declined giving any other than those contained in his written protest. It may, however, be proper to add, that Mr. R. was born and reared in the Romish Church, and received an education in Georgetown, D. C. Here, while a youth, he was professedly awakened and converted under the Methodist ministry, joined our church, and entered the traveling connection on trial in the Baltimore conference, in the year 1804. Whether it was from an early bias in favor of Roman Catholicism, from which he was never entirely deliv-

and *Dyer Burge*, had withdrawn. *George Dougharty Bennet Kendrick, Henry Willis*, and *Richard Swain* had died.

The obituary notices of preachers now began to be considerably lengthened in the published minutes, and as all can have recourse to these for information respecting their character, labors, and deaths, I must, to make room for other matters more essentially connected with the history of the Church, continue to omit, or modify these, as the nature of the case may seem to require.

Of George Dougharty we have already spoken in the account of the work in Charleston, S. C. It is stated that his character stood exceedingly high in his conference, both as a preacher and a presiding elder, furnishing the most indubitable evidence of his readiness and qualification to fill with dignity and usefulness any department of the work to which he might be called. After filling the stations allotted him in the church with great fidelity, and discharging the duties of his office as long as he was able to move, he manifested his courage in the cause of God, by bringing forward a resolution in the last conference he attended, in 1807, declaring "that if any preacher should desert his station through fear, in time of sickness or danger, the conference should never employ that man again."

ered, or from a supposed conviction of the truth of its doctrine and usages, and a belief that he could, by entering that communion, become more extensively useful, are questions which are left to be solved in that day which shall disclose the secrets of all hearts. So far as is known to the writer, Mr. Richards has maintained a reputable standing in the church to which he attached himself.

It is said that he sustained this resolution, however rigid it may appear, with such force and energy of argument, that he carried his cause, and thus, like a general who dies in the arms of victory, he triumphed in this last public act of his life over all opposition.

His last sufferings were indescribably severe; but he bore them with that meek submission to the divine will by which he had ever been distinguished during his active life; and on the 23d day of March, 1807, he took his departure from a world of labor and suffering, to a land of rest and joy, after having devoted the last nine years of his life to the services of the sanctuary.

His abilities as a preacher were of a high order, and they were guided in their exercise by that wisdom and prudence, and attended by that "unction from the Holy One," which made them subservient to the advancement of the cause and interests of Jesus Christ. Whenever he spoke in the name of God, he most evidently spoke of what he *knew* and *felt*, and not merely from a speculative knowledge of the truths of God. And hence his word was in "power, and in much assurance, and in the Holy Ghost,"—the hearts of God's people vibrating to the truths he uttered, while sinners were made to *feel* that they stood in the presence of a man commissioned of "God to show unto them the way of salvation."

The life of such a man is an expressive comment upon the gospel he preaches, and his death a powerful attestation to its truth and excellence. He indeed, while struggling in the arms of death, and in full view of eternity, said with holy triumph, "The goodness and love of God to me are great and marvellous, as I

go down the declivity of death." And so unclouded was his understanding and tranquil his spirit in the hour of his dissolution, that his true greatness was never before so fully appreciated by his friends.

Henry Willis was also a "burning and a shining light." He was naturally of a strong mind, and this he diligently improved by an assiduous application to reading and observation. After he became so debilitated that he was not able to devote himself exclusively to the traveling ministry, considering that his call to this work was from God, he did not dare desist from doing all he could, while he so applied himself to temporal business as not to be dependent on the church for a support. Systematic in all his movements, zealous in whatever he undertook to do, and uniform in his obedience to the commands of God, he accomplished much in a short time, and with comparatively slender means. In the various relations he sustained, whether as a son, a husband, a father, or a minister of Jesus Christ, he exemplified the duties originating from them, thus giving evidence that real religion has its appropriate duties, and that all could be discharged without interfering one with another.

He commenced his ministry in 1779, and from that time forth filled some of the most important stations in the Church, in the states of South and North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New-York, and in the new countries west of the Alleghany mountains; and he continued his exertions in the cause of God until 1795, when, being worn down with labor, he received a supernumerary relation, and was stationed in the city of Baltimore. This relation he held from this time until the day of his death, labor-

ing, as before said, with his own hands, that he "might be chargeable to none," for the support of himself and family. He was everywhere received as a messenger of God, and was long remembered by those who sat under his ministry, with most affectionate veneration, as having been an instrument of lasting benefit to their souls. The record of his death, which states that he died with a triumphant faith in Jesus Christ, calls him a "great man of God," an appellation which shows the high estimation in which he was held by those best capable of appreciating his worth.

He died early in the year 1808, in the full hope of "immortality and eternal life," leaving behind him, as the most valuable legacy which a father can bequeath to his children or a minister to the church, a "good name"—the remembrance of which "is as precious ointment poured forth."

Of Bennet Kendrick excellent things are said, as well as of Richard Swaim. They were both faithful and successful in their ministry, and died the peaceful death of the righteous.

The following account of Captain *Thomas Webb*, which should have appeared under date of 1796, was inadvertently omitted until those pages were printed off. But as he was one of the two first Methodist preachers who came to America, he deserves a respectful notice among the worthies of that chivalrous age of Methodism when the sword of the Lord and of Wesley was so successfully wielded in conquering souls to Jesus Christ.

It has indeed been affirmed by some, that Capt. Webb was the founder of Methodism in New-York; but this, I am confident, is a mistake, as I took much

pains to ascertain the facts in relation to the society in this city, and received them from the lips of persons who had a personal knowledge and perfect recollection of all the circumstances as they are related in the second chapter of the first volume of this work.

Nevertheless, Capt. Webb contributed much by his prayers, preaching, and example, to build up the cause of God, to increase the number, and to strengthen the hearts and hands of the society in the city of New-York.

He was a soldier of the British army, and was with Gen. Wolfe at the conquest of Quebec in 1758, and during the engagement on the plains of Abraham, under the walls of the city, he received a wound in his arm and lost his right eye, on account of which he ever after wore a bandage over that part of his head, as may be seen by an inspection of the likeness which accompanies this volume. At this time, the fear of God was not before his eyes; but on his return to England, in the year 1764, he was brought to see himself a sinner through the preaching of Mr. Wesley in the city of Bristol. He then became acquainted with an evangelical minister of the establishment, and through him with the Methodists, with whom he soon after united himself, and found the "pearl of great price."

Having his heart fired with love to God and his fellow-men, he began to entreat them to "flee the wrath to come," and to believe in Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls. In his first appearance in public as a preacher, which was in the city of Bath, in England, he dwelt chiefly on his own experience of divine things; but the people who heard him were edified

and refreshed under his public exercises, which greatly encouraged him to persevere in this labor of love

Not long after this, in the year 1765 or 1766, he was appointed barrack-master of Albany, in the colony of New-York. Here he set up family prayer in his own house, which some of his neighbors frequently attended, to whom he gave a word of exhortation and advice. The blessing of God attending these incipient efforts to do good, he was induced to extend his labors, and he began holding meetings among his fellow-soldiers and others who wished to attend.

After the arrival of Mr. Embury and his associates in New-York, Capt. Webb, hearing of their having begun to hold meetings, paid them a visit. His first appearance among them was in the public assembly, and as he wore the uniform of a British captain, the little society were fearful at first, that he had come to "spy out their liberties in Christ;" but, as already related in the account given of the rise of this society, when they saw him kneel in prayer and devoutly participate with them in their acts of devotion, their fears were exchanged for joy, and they hailed "him as a brother beloved." He was therefore soon invited to preach, which he did with great energy and acceptance. His appearance in the pulpit in the costume of a military officer, with his sword either lying by his side or swinging in its scabbard, was a novelty that attracted much attention and excited no little surprise among the citizens who attended the meetings. His preaching, however, was in demonstration and power, and he generally related his own experience as an evidence of the truth of his doctrine respecting experimental religion. But his experience being very

deep, as he had a severe struggle while *passing from death to life*, and also obtained an unclouded witness of his acceptance in the Beloved, it is stated by those who heard him in those days, that he always took care to guard weak believers against "casting away their confidence," because they could not realize the same bright testimony of their justification by faith in Christ with which he had been so highly favored.

He did not, however, confine his labors to New-York and Albany. The records of those days represent him as visiting Philadelphia and Long Island, where he preached with success, the Lord setting his seal to the words of his servant. He was, indeed, mighty in the Scriptures, and very pointed in his appeals to the consciences of unconverted sinners; and the result proved that the Spirit of God accompanied his energetic labors, to the awakening and conversion of souls.

How long he remained in America I cannot tell; but in 1772 we find from a letter of Mr. Wesley, that he was in Dublin in Ireland, and Mr. Wesley says of him, "he is a man of fire, and the power of God constantly accompanies his word." In 1773 Mr. Wesley speaks of his preaching at the Foundry in London, and says, "I admire the wisdom of God in still raising up various preachers, according to the various tastes of men. The captain is all life and fire; therefore, although he is not deep or regular, yet many, who would not hear a better preacher, flock together to hear him. And many are convinced under his preaching; some justified; a few built up in love." Ten years after this he speaks of Capt. Webb's having "lately kindled a flame here," (in the neigh-

borhood of Bath,) "and it is not yet gone out. Several persons were still rejoicing in God. I found his preaching in the street of Winchester had been blessed greatly. Many were more or less convinced of sin, and several had found peace with God. I never saw the house before so crowded with serious and attentive hearers." In 1785 he bears a similar testimony to his usefulness, in kindling up the fire of devotion among the people.

From these testimonies it appears that Capt. Webb retained his piety and zeal in the cause of God, although Charles Wesley, whose charity was sometimes a little cramped by his high notions of Church order, said, in a letter to Joseph Benson, that the captain was "an inexperienced, honest, zealous, loving enthusiast." His enthusiasm was that of a warm-hearted, "zealous, honest, and loving" servant of God, whose powers were devoted to the highest interests of mankind,—although we may allow that he lacked that extensive knowledge which is acquired only by a laborious application to study.

His death is said to have been sudden. Having a presentiment of his approaching dissolution, a few days before his death he expressed his wishes to a friend respecting the place and manner of his interment, adding,—"I should prefer a triumphant death; but I may be taken away suddenly. However, I know I am happy in the Lord, and shall be with him, and that is sufficient." A little after 10 o'clock, on the 20th of December, 1796, after taking his supper and praying with his family, he went to his bed in apparent good health; but shortly his breathing became difficult; he arose and sat at the foot of the

bed; but while Mrs. Webb was standing by him, he fell back on the bed, and before any other person could be called, he sunk into the arms of death without any apparent pain, aged 72 years.

It is matter of gratitude to God that Capt. Webb, as well as Mr. Embury, "held fast his confidence steadfast unto the end," and therefore "received the full reward" of his labors. Mr. Embury, after laboring successfully in the cause of Christ in New-York, removed to Ashgrove, where he ended his days in the service of his God, and where he lies entombed, mingling his ashes with his relatives who have followed him to the grave, waiting for the "final doom," when the trump of God shall awaken him to life and immortality. Capt. Webb, after "sowing the good seed of the kingdom" in various places in this country, returned to Europe, and spent the remainder of his days in "kindling the fire" of divine love in the hearts of God's people, in warning sinners of their impending danger, and pointing penitent mourners to the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." While therefore the one shall arise at the "voice of the Son of God" from his "dusty bed" in America, and receive the plaudits of those of her sons and daughters who were brought to God by his ministry, the other shall come forth in obedience to the same mandate from his resting-place in England, and hail each other blessed amid the shouts of the redeemed, while *all*, whether white or black, whether from the eastern or western continent, shall unitedly, and with one voice, ascribe the GLORY OF THEIR SALVATION TO GOD AND THE LAMB FOR EVER.

In the meanwhile, were the happy spirits of these

individuals, so obscure in their life time, and by some considered as merely "honest and loving enthusiasts," permitted to look down on this American continent, and behold the thousands which have been "taken out of the horrible pit and miry clay," and had "their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb," since they commenced their humble efforts in the city of New-York, would not their souls exult in praises to God and the Lamb for having redeemed them from the earth, and placed them among the princes of his people!

Captain Webb was no doubt somewhat eccentric in his movements, limited in his knowledge, and of moderate talents as a preacher of the gospel; but, from the testimony of Mr. Wesley and others who knew him well, his soul was fired with an ardent zeal for God, and was drawn out with an unquenchable thirst for the salvation of his fellow-men, and the building up of the Redeemer's kingdom. As such, God honored him with his blessing—and as such we honor his memory, and record this feeble tribute of respect to him, as one of the first Wesleyan preachers who published the gospel on these American shores.

Numbers of Church members.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	121,687	30,308	151,995	540
Last year	114,727	29,863	144,590	516
Increase	6,960	445	7,405	24

1809. The same number of conferences was held this year as last, and they were attended by the two bishops in the usual manner.

Several new circuits were added within the bounds

of the Western conference, by which the work in that country was considerably enlarged. And, in addition to the sketches which have already been given of the commencement and progress of Methodism in Ohio, may be added the following, taken chiefly from the narrative of the Rev. Henry Smith, who was among the first who carried the gospel into some portions of the country bordering upon the Ohio, and lying between the Big and Little Miami rivers, and the Sciota river.

It seems that as early as 1799 Mr. Smith visited the settlements along the banks of the Miami river, including the Miami and Sciota counties, and being assisted by Mr. Hunt, formed a six weeks' circuit, which they traveled with no small difficulty. He found the country thinly inhabited, but among those who had settled there, were a number who had been Methodists in the countries whence they came, some retaining their piety, and others in a backslidden state. On the Scioto Bush creek, and at the mouth of the Scioto river, he found several Methodist families, among the latter of whom was a local preacher by the name of William Jackson. Here he formed a class.

Over this country, along the banks of the Miamis and their tributary streams, he traveled, often exposed to hardships and privations which few could well endure, but was abundantly compensated by a consciousness of the divine approbation, and by witnessing the blessing of God on his labors. Many sinners were brought to the knowledge of the truth by his agency, who afterward brought forth the fruits of righteousness to the glory of God.

From this time, as we have already seen, the work continued to spread in various directions, until the time of which we now speak, when *Miami* was the district of a presiding elder, with six circuits, employing thirteen preachers, including the presiding elder; and in 1810 there were four thousand seven hundred and eighty-four members in the Church.

Though we had no Missionary Society at that time, nor consequently any funds for the support of those who went into the new settlements, yet Bishop Asbury was in the habit, as he passed through the more wealthy portions of the work, of soliciting donations from benevolent individuals for the purpose of sustaining those who might volunteer their services to "break up new ground," as it was then not unaptly called. And this year we find *Robert Cloud* attached as a missionary to the Muskingum district, *James H. Mellard* to the Seleuda district, to labor between the Ashley and Savannah rivers, and *James E. Glenn* to the Camden district, to occupy the country between Santee and Cooper rivers. By this means, the gospel was sent to these destitute settlements, "without money and without price." *William Case* was also sent as a missionary to Detroit in the Michigan territory; and an attempt was made to introduce the gospel at the Three rivers in Lower Canada, a place about midway between Montreal and Quebec.

A new circuit was formed this year in the bounds of the western conference, called *Cold Water*, Upper Louisiana, in the fork of the Mississippi, by the labors of *John Crane*, a young man of precocious genius, and remarkable for the early exhibitions of talent and piety, and those powers of pulpit oratory

which attract the attention of the multitude. In this new country he had a full opportunity for the exercise of all his energies in contending with hardships, in combating the errors and prejudices of the people, and in striving to establish societies in the pure doctrines of Christ. He succeeded so far as to return the next year seventy-five members of the Church as the fruits of his ministry. He was reappointed in 1810 to the same field of labor, with the Missouri circuit added to Cold Water, which made his rides long, and the more difficult, for want of roads and bridges, as he was frequently obliged to swim his horse over the Missouri river in passing from one appointment to another—a practice by no means uncommon in those days, when the forests were falling beneath the strokes of the woodsman's axe, and the traveler was wending his way by Indian tracks, or merely guided by marked trees.

In addition to this enlargement of the field of labor in the exterior settlements, prosperity attended the efforts of God's servants in various portions of the work, in the older countries, and in several of the principal cities.

The brethren in Boston had suffered much inconvenience on account of the smallness of their house of worship. To remedy this inconvenience, they had commenced a larger house in Bloomfield lane, some two or three years before; but as the members of the society were comparatively poor, they found themselves embarrassed with a heavy debt, which they were unable to pay. To relieve them from this pressure, the General Conference of 1808 had authorized a general subscription to be taken among the

more wealthy societies, by which they were enabled to pay off a portion of their debt, and thus to accommodate the people who wished to attend the Methodist ministry. This gave a new impulse to the cause in that city, and it has steadily progressed from that time with more encouraging success than heretofore.

The camp-meetings continued to be held more generally than ever, and were owned of God to the awakening and conversion of sinners, and tended much to quicken the people of God in their own souls, and to stimulate them to more vigorous exertions for the salvation of others. And as this history may be read by some who have never attended these meetings, it may not be out of place to give a description of the manner in which they are attended.

We have already seen that they were introduced casually, or it may be more proper to say, providentially, in the western country, at a sacramental occasion, when such a number of people attended that no house could be found large enough to accommodate them. The good effects resulting from these meetings soon led to a regular method of holding them in different parts of the country by previous appointment and preparation. For this purpose, a grove is generally selected, in the neighborhood of good water, and, if possible, in such a place that the people may go by water, in sloops or steam-boats. The under-brush is cleared away, seats of boards or plank and a stand for the preachers are prepared in convenient order. On the ground thus prepared tents are erected, from twenty to two hundred in number, of different sizes and material, some of cloth and some of boards, but more generally of the former. These temporary shelters

are of various sizes, some for single families, and some sufficiently large to hold from twenty to fifty, and perhaps a hundred individuals, and others, for the accommodation of such as choose it, are for boarding-tents.

On the day appointed, the people are seen assembling from various directions, some in carriages or wagons from the country, and a multitude of others from the cities and villages along the water courses, in sloops or steamboats, with their bedding, cooking utensils and provisions; for the meeting generally continues four or five days, and in some instances eight or nine days. These all repair to their places, and, if not already done for them, erect their tents, and prepare for the solemn exercises of the meeting.

The tents are generally arranged in a circular form in front of the stand, and in those held in the neighborhood of the city of New-York, with which I am best acquainted, the rows of tents are from three to six deep, and arranged on several streets, numbered and labelled, so that they may be distinguished one from another, and passed between. The fires for cooking are in general behind the tents, so that the people may not be discommoded with the smoke, &c.

Lamps are prepared, and suspended on the trunks of the trees, and on the preachers' stand, in sufficient number to illuminate the entire encampment, and each tent must have a light burning in it through the night, and the utmost pains are taken to see that no disorderly conduct be allowed on the ground by either night or day. The rules and orders of the meeting are generally as follows, varying so as to suit different circumstances:—

1. The times of preaching are 10 o'clock, A. M., and 3 and 7 o'clock, P. M., notice of which is given by the sound of a trumpet or horn at the preachers' stand.

2. The intermediate time between preaching is occupied in prayer meetings, singing, and exhortation.

3. In time of worship persons are prohibited from walking to and fro, talking, smoking, or otherwise disturbing the solemnities of the meeting.

4. All are required, except on the last night of the meeting, to be in their tents at 10 o'clock, P. M., and to arise at 5, A. M.

5. At 6 o'clock, A. M., they are required to take their breakfast, before which family prayer is attended in each tent occupied by a family.

6. In time of preaching all are required to attend, except one to take care of the tent.

7. That these rules may be observed, they are published from the stand, and a committee appointed to enforce them.

8. A watch is generally appointed to superintend the encampment at night, to keep order, to see that no stragglers are on the ground, and to detect any disorderly conduct.

9. In some places there are large tents provided, at the expense of the society to which they belong, for the purpose of holding prayer-meetings, more particularly in the evening, or in rainy weather.

10. In the city of New-York the entire arrangement and preparation of the meeting, providing tents, putting them up and taking them down, is under the superintendence of a committee appointed for that purpose by the presiding elder of the district, who

also procure the steamboat to take the people to and from the meeting; and each person who chooses to go pays a certain amount, commonly about one dollar, for passage, use of tent, fuel, straw, &c.

This is a general description of a camp-meeting. The number attending varies from five hundred to ten thousand—and, as we have before seen, when they were first introduced in the west, to twenty thousand—in proportion to the paucity or density of the population. That good has resulted from these meetings must be evident to every impartial person who has either attended them or witnessed their effects—although it must be admitted that some accidental evils have flowed from them. But these have originated chiefly from the attendance of persons who have gone for other purposes than to worship God. Though most of the state legislatures have passed laws to protect the free exercise of religious meetings, and some to protect camp-meetings in particular, yet there are those in the community who, actuated by mercenary motives, will go and set up hucksters' shops, sell strong liquors and other things, and then invite the thoughtless rabble to convene for convivial purposes, to the annoyance of the peaceable worshipers of God. These have often created disturbances, and they always, when arranged along the road leading to the encampment, present a spectacle to the sober mind of a disgusting character. But they who provide those things and partake of them, are alone responsible for the evils which they create. Neither camp-meetings nor those who attend them for religious purposes are accountable for the disorderly conduct of those who, in defiance of law, of religion, and de-

cency, violate the order of the meeting, and bring on themselves the disgrace of being disturbers of the peace. For such conduct the friends of camp-meetings are no more responsible than the builders of churches and those who peaceably worship God in them, are accountable for any disturbance which a wicked rabble may make within, or for the conduct of a riotous mob without these sacred temples.

Were all who come within the encampment, or who go to the meeting, to observe the order prescribed, there need be no more disorder than there should be in a house of worship.

It has been objected that professors of religion themselves often violate the rules of religious order by unseemly gesticulations and boisterous exclamations. It may, indeed, be so—and we no more justify these things than we do the same exceptionable conduct in other places—but there is nothing in the time, the place, or the object of coming together, which need excite these censurable manifestations, more than in any other place of worship. "Let all things be done decently and in order" at camp-meetings, and they shall still be rendered a blessing, as they have heretofore been, to the souls of the people. There is greater danger at present arising from their degenerating into seasons of idle recreation, than of their being abused by ranting fanaticism. In the neighborhood of large cities, where the meetings are easy of access by steamboats, which ply constantly to and from the encampment, there is an alluring temptation for the idle and the gay, as well as for the luke-warm professors of religion, to go to the meetings as mere matters of amusement, and thus to make the nominal

service of God a pretext to gratify a roving and inquisitive disposition. Whenever these and similar evils shall threaten to counterbalance the good, the friends of pure religion will either apply the corrective or abandon camp-meetings as a nuisance or as a means susceptible of an incurable abuse. But while they are kept under the control of a sober judgment, and attended from a pure desire to advance the cause of Christ, they will be patronised by the pious as one of the prudential means of effecting the salvation of men.

I know not that I can furnish the reader with a juster idea of a well conducted camp-meeting, than by inserting the following account of one held at Cowharbor, Long Island, in the state of New-York, August 11, 1818. It was written indeed under the impulse of those vivid sensations which were produced by a participation in the solemn exercises of the occasion, and by a glow of fervent feeling which may have betrayed the writer into a warmth of expression which none but those similarly situated know how to interpret and appreciate. If this, however, be a fault, it should be considered a pardonable one, as it arises principally from a strong and lively feeling of devotion which the writer felt at the time; and yet, I humbly trust, it was written under the dictates of a cool and reflecting judgment, chastened and hallowed by a grateful recollection of the goodness of God. The following is the account alluded to:—

"An unusual number of people were assembled on Tuesday, when the exercises began under the most favorable auspices. The word of the Lord which was delivered, was received by the people with apparent eagerness and de-

light. Great peace and harmony prevailed; and the prayers of God's people were fervent and incessant. In the evening there were some conversions.

"There were between forty and fifty sloops in the harbor; and it was judged that there were from six to eight thousand people on the encampment; and, what was most desirable, great order and solemnity prevailed.

"According to the order of the meeting, the people this night retired to rest at ten o'clock. The next morning opened a delightful prospect to a contemplative mind. The rising sun in the east, darting his lucid beams through the grove, which was now rendered vocal by the voice of morning prayer in the several tents, announced the superintending care, and proclaimed the majesty of Him who maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good. The gentle zephyrs softly whispering through the foliage of the beautiful grove, now consecrated to God, was an expressive emblem of that divine Spirit which so sweetly filled the soul and tranquilized all the passions of the human heart. Not a turbulent passion was permitted to interrupt the sacred peace and divine harmony which the heavenly Dove had imparted to God's beloved people. The exercises of this day were solemn, impressive, and divinely animating. The falling tear from many eyes witnessed the inward anguish which was produced in the hearts of sinners by the word of eternal truth. Those trembling sinners, groaning under the weight of their sins, were encircled by God's people, and lifted to his throne in the arms of faith and prayer. Some were disburthened of their load; and their shouts of praise testified that Jesus had become their Friend,

"The departure of the sun under the western horizon indicated the time to have arrived for the intelligent creation to lose themselves once more in

'Tir'd nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep.'

But, while some obeyed the impulse of nature, and suffered the soft slumbers of the evening shades to lock up their external senses, others, animated by the love of God, and attracted by the sympathetic groans of wounded sinners, whose piercing cries ascended to heaven, committing themselves to the protection of God, assembled in groups, and united their petitions and intercessions to almighty God in behalf of themselves and their mourning fellow-creatures. Neither did they labor in vain; for some of these mourning penitents emerged into the liberties of the gospel. About midnight I was attracted by the shouts of an intimate friend, who had been sometime overwhelmed upon the stand with the power of God. In company with some of the young disciples of Christ, I drew near, while he proclaimed the wonders of redeeming love. I at first looked on with the criticising eye of cool philosophy, determined not to be carried away with passionate exclamations. Bracing myself as much as possible, I was resolved my passions should not get the ascendancy over my judgment. But, in spite of all my philosophy, my prejudice, and my resistance, my heart suddenly melted like wax before the fire, and my nerves seemed in a moment relaxed. These devout exercises were finally interrupted by a shower of rain; but the showers of grace descended so plentifully that sleep could not be persuaded to visit many of our eyes. So we sang

'With thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.'

"The next day was remarkable on account of the presence of *Him who dwelt in the bush.* The sermons were pointed, lively, and solemn. The prayers were ardent, faithful, and persevering. The singing melodious, and calculated to elevate the mind to the third heaven. The shouts of redeeming love were solemnly delightful; and

the cries of penitent sinners deep and piercing. Notwithstanding the almost incessant labors of the last twenty-four hours, when night came on many seemed determined not to intermit their religious exercises. Their souls being knit together by divine love, they persevered in their prayers and exhortations; some heavy-laden sinners, delivered from their sins, were enabled to praise God for his pardoning mercy.

"Friday was the day appointed to close our meeting. It had been unusually solemn, and profitable to many, very many souls; and the hour of separation was anticipated with reluctance. The exercises of this day were attended with an uncommon manifestation of the power and presence of God. The mournful cries of penitent sinners were many and strong; and the professors of religion were ardently engaged in praying for them; and not a few were groaning for full redemption in the blood of the Lamb. While engaged in this exercise, some of the preachers were baptized afresh *with the Holy Ghost and fire;* and their cup ran over with love to God and to the souls of men.

"After the meeting was closed, circumstances rendered it expedient for the people from New-York, and some others, to remain on the ground another night. This news was received by most of the people with delightful sensations. Indeed, the place had become a sanctified Bethel to our souls.

"At 6 o'clock, P. M., the people were summoned to the stand for preaching. The preacher who was to address them, after singing and prayer, read the following text:—'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.' Not being able to proceed, a preacher standing near one of the tents, perceiving his situation, went on the stand, took the text which had

been read, and made some observations upon it, which were attended with divine authority, and with the unction of the Holy One. Many fell to the ground under the mighty power of God, while the shouts of the redeemed seemed to rend the heavens, and to be carried on the waves of the undulating air to the distant hills, and in their rolling melody proclaimed the praises of Him who sits upon the throne and of the Lamb.

"This was one of the most awfully solemn scenes my eyes ever beheld. Such a sense of the ineffable Majesty rested upon my soul, that I was lost in astonishment, wonder, and profound adoration. Human language cannot express the solemn, the delightful, the deep and joyful sensation which pervaded my soul. Nor me alone. It was a general shower of divine love. It seemed as if the windows of heaven were opened, and such a blessing poured out that there was scarcely room to contain it. The glory of the God-man shone with divine lustre all around, and filled every believing heart. Singing, prayer, and exhortation were continued more or less until 3 o'clock next morning, the hour appointed to prepare to leave the consecrated ground. Many were the subjects of convert ing grace; and great was the joy of the happy Christians.

"About 8 o'clock, A. M., Saturday, those of us from the city embarked in the steam-boat Connecticut, Captain Bunker, whose polite attention deserves our warmest thanks. It seemed like leaving the place of the divine *Shekinah*, and going into the world again—but still the presence of our God rested upon us.

"I trust the fruits of this camp-meeting will be extensively witnessed. Not only sinners were awakened and converted, but very many believers were quickened, and the work of grace was deepened in their hearts; and some who had been languid in their spiritual enjoyments formed resolutions to be entirely devoted to God. May they never

violate their solemn vow, nor suffer their serious impressions to be effaced. Let no vain amusement, no trifling company, nor any worldly concern divert your attention, ye young professors of religion, or ever efface from your minds those solemn impressions of God, and of his goodness, which you have received.

"The writer of this imperfect sketch feels as if he should praise God in eternity for this camp-meeting. What a sacred fire has been kindled at this holy altar. May many waters never extinguish it. It is not a transient blaze or a sudden ecstasy. No; my soul bows with submission to my God, and thankfully acknowledges the continuance of his loving kindness. The bare recollection of that solemn pause—when Jesus spoke—with a voice more melodious than all the harps of the muses—fills my soul with solemn delight.

"Sometimes when I have indulged in the cool speculations which worldly prudence would suggest, so many objections have been raised in my mind against camp-meetings, that I have been ready to proclaim war against them; but these objections have uniformly been obviated by witnessing the beneficial effects of the meetings while attending them. My theories have all been torn in pieces while testing them by actual experiment—but never more effectually than by this last. This is more convincing than all the arguments in the world. What I experience I know; and hundreds of others, equally competent to decide, would, were they called upon, bear a similar testimony. O! ye happy souls that were bathed in the love of God at this meeting! May you ever evince to the world by the uniformity of your Christian conduct, that such meetings are highly useful.

"An indescribable pleasure is even now felt from reviewing those moments of solemn delight, while our kindred spirits, attracted by the love of Jesus Christ, joyfully

adored the God of our salvation. May such seasons of refreshing often return. O! the depth of redeeming love!

'Angel minds are lost to ponder
Dying love's mysterious cause.'

"One thing which contributed greatly to the promotion of the cause of God at this meeting was the order and regularity which prevailed. There was little or no disturbance from spectators; and but little confusion in any of the religious exercises. Sometimes, indeed, the ardor of the mind, when powerfully operated upon by the Spirit of God, would lead it to break over the bounds of moderation; but in general the exercises were conducted with much decorum and regularity. Hymns were selected which were solemn and impressive; and the prayers and exhortations, as well as the preaching, all indicated that the mind was under the direction of grace.

"How many were brought to the experience of redeeming grace, cannot be correctly ascertained; but the number must have been very considerable. New-York, as well as other places, will, I trust, be greatly profited by means of this meeting. A general quickening is already witnessed, and some sinners have been awakened and converted since our return. May their numbers be continually multiplied."

That the reader may see that similar effects attended camp-meetings in other parts of the country, I give the following, which was written by the *Rev. William Beauchamp*—since gone to his reward—who was remarkable for the coolness and soundness of his judgment, and freedom from every thing bordering upon enthusiasm. This account is as follows:—

"A camp-meeting was lately held, about thirty-five miles from this place, in a south-westerly direction, under the

superintendence of brother John Stewart, the traveling Methodist preacher having the charge of Mount Carmel circuit. It commenced on the afternoon of Friday, the 20th day of last month, and closed on the morning of the following Monday. The congregation was not large, usually about three hundred souls; on the sabbath perhaps six hundred. This meeting was remarkable for seriousness, solemnity, and good order. Such a sense of the divine presence appeared to rest on the assembly, that those who might have been disposed to be rude were restrained, and awed into respectful deportment. It was obvious that the ministers who addressed the people were clothed, both in their sermons and exhortations, with power from on high; for their word fell upon the congregation in the demonstration of the Holy Ghost. Divine illumination seemed, at times, to flash like lightning upon the assembly, and produced the most powerful effects. The mild splendor of heavenly joy shone in the faces of the people of God; while the darkness of condemnation and the horrors of guilt hung, like the shadows of death, upon the countenances of the ungodly. The merciful power of God was manifested in a particular manner in the conviction of sinners and the justification of mourning penitents; while believers were not destitute of its divine influence, by which they drank deeper into the spirit of holiness.

"In the intervals of preaching, it was common to see a number of mourning souls prostrate near the stand, for whom supplications were offered unto a throne of grace. And they were not offered in vain. About twenty professed to be reconciled to God through faith in the blood of Christ. Several joined our Church.

"On Monday morning, under the last sermon preached at this meeting, we seemed to be in the very suburbs of heaven. The subject was, '*The inheritance of the saints in light.*' The preacher, apparently swallowed up in the

subject, bore the congregation away with him into the celestial regions, in the contemplation of the glories of the world to come. It was a very precious time to the religious part of the assembly; and the irreligious part, I doubt not, received some very strong and deep impressions of the eternal world. I know not that there was one dry eye in the whole assembly.

"On the Friday following another camp-meeting commenced in the neighborhood of this place. In respect to numbers it was similar to the former one; nor was it less remarkable in regard to seriousness, solemnity, and good order. In this respect I can truly say, that, though I have been at many camp-meetings, I never saw such as these before. We had no guard; and at the last meeting no rules, for the regulations of it, were published. We needed none. God was our defence and salvation. He encamped with us in his gracious and glorious presence, to awe the wicked into respect for his worship, and to shed upon the children of faith the richest effusions of divine grace.

"The latter of these meetings was different, in some respects, from the former. The preaching did not appear to be attended with so much power, and such displays of divine illumination. But the prayer-meetings in the intervals were more abundantly distinguished by the communication of justifying grace, in answer to the supplications of the people of God. About forty-five professed to receive the forgiveness of sins, and twenty-three offered themselves to become members of our Church.

"One circumstance is worthy of particular notice. A Scotch family, remarkable for good breeding and propriety of deportment, attended this meeting. They were eight in number; the elderly gentleman, his lady, three daughters, two sons, and a nephew. The female head of this family was not destitute of the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins. This treasure she had obtained in

her native country. But the rest were not in possession of this pearl of great price. However, in the course of a few hours, at this meeting, they were all powerfully convicted, and, I have reason to believe, truly converted to God.

"This is a singular circumstance. Such a family as this was is rarely found; and the conversion of seven persons out of eight belonging to it, under such circumstances, within the compass of a few hours, is, perhaps, almost without a parallel. It will not escape the notice of the pious mind, accustomed to reflect on the workings of nature and the operations of grace, that the self-righteousness of such persons generally presents the strongest barrier against faith. But the power of divine grace broke down this barrier in them; then they sunk, in humble confidence, on the merits of the Redeemer.

"The presiding elder who attended this meeting, informed me that many camp-meetings had been held in his district, and that they had been generally blessed with great displays of divine power. Since then I have received information through another medium, that a camp-meeting held not far from Shawneetown in this state was favored with an abundant outpouring of the grace of God. More than thirty persons professed to obtain the remission of their sins.

"The writer of this communication has remarked for a number of years past, that a large proportion of those who are brought to the possession of the life and power of godliness, are found among the rising generation. This was particularly so at the meetings above mentioned. Does this not strongly portend that God is about to effect some great and glorious purpose in favor of his church, by the generation which is to succeed us? Thanks be unto his name for what he has done. But he has more in store for our world than we can readily conceive. May his

goodness be manifested in such gracious displays of Almighty power as will bear down all opposition. Amen.

"*Mount Carmel, Illinois, Aug.* 15, 1821."

These accounts, together with the preceding historical sketches and remarks, will enable the dispassionate reader to form an estimate of the character of camp-meetings, and of their effects upon the church and society generally.

No less than fifty-three preachers located this year; eight were returned superannuated, and one was expelled.

Three preachers, namely, *Edmund Henly*, *Leonard Cassell*, and *Henry Martin*, had ended their days in peace. They were all comparatively young in the ministry, but had discharged its duties with fidelity, giving evidence of fervent piety and improving talents.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	131,154	31,884	163,038	597
Last year	121,687	30,308	151,995	540
Increase	9,467	1,576	11,043	57

1810. This year the Genesee Conference was formed, making eight in all. Such had been the increase of preachers and people in western New-York and in the Canadas, particularly in the upper province, that the bishops thought it advisable, in the exercise of the authority invested in them by the last General Conference, to set off a new conference for the accommodation of that part of the work.

This year the Western conference was held in Cincinnati, Ohio, where Methodism had grown up with

the growth of the place, and strengthened with its strength. And as this is considered the "queen city" of the west, perhaps it may not be amiss to give some account of its location and first settlements, as well as the progress of the gospel among its inhabitants.

Cincinnati was first laid out as a town in 1789, when the population could not have been more than between two and three hundred, for in 1800 it was only seven hundred and fifty—whereas now it numbers more than forty thousand.

It is beautifully located on the western bank of the Ohio river, in Hamilton county, on a plain, the hills behind it rising like a spacious amphitheatre, giving a commanding view of the city, the Ohio river, and the surrounding country, variegated as it is by hill and dale.

By whom and at what time Methodism was introduced into Cincinnati, I have not been able to learn, but presume it must have been about the year 1800, under the labors of *Henry Smith*, as he formed what was called the Miami circuit about that time, to which Cincinnati was attached until the year 1809. In the year 1805 Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat visited the town, and put up at the house of William Lives. At that time there were few in the place who feared God, and but a small society of Methodists. Bishop Asbury, however, gave them a discourse on "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found."* In 1807 Bishop Asbury was again in Cincinnati, and remarks that the brethren had succeeded in building a stone house of worship, forty feet by thirty, which, it is

* See his Journal, vol. iii. p. 178.

presumed, was the first built in that city. Here he preached on Sabbath, Sept. 26, to a crowded house, and then met the society and ordained W. M'Neachan and William Whitiker to the office of deacon.*

Before his arrival in Cincinnati the bishop had attended a camp-meeting at Hockhocking, and a conference at Chilicothe, of which he speaks as having a salutary effect upon the minds of the people. "Notwithstanding," he remarks, "opposition from more than one quarter, our last camp-meeting was successful; the fruit is immediate; and where it is not it will yet be seen."

In 1808, after traversing various parts of the country, attending camp and other meetings, we find him, in company with Henry Boehm, who preached to the people of Cincinnati in the German language, again in this place, where he preached on Sabbath morning to the people with much satisfaction, and again at 3 o'clock in the house of brother Lakin. He says in this connection, "I have advised the society here to invite the Western yearly conference to hold their session in Cincinnati."

The next year, in company with Bishop M'Kendree, we find him once more in Cincinnati, when he remarks:—"The house here is enlarged, and the society increased."

Until the year 1809, the *Miami* circuit included Cincinnati, and contained one thousand two hundred and eighty church members. But at the conference for 1809 the name of the circuit was changed to Cincinnati, and Miami became the name of a new district. This year, 1810, there are returned on the mi-

* See his Journal, vol. iii. p. 334.

nutes of conference for Cincinnati, eight hundred and twenty-one church members, under the charge of two preachers; but whether it included any other places than the city, I cannot tell.

This year, as before said, in accordance with the advice of Bishop Asbury, the Western conference was held in Cincinnati. He arrived there on Thursday, the 27th of September, and on Sunday preached morning and evening, met the society on Monday, and "I felt," says he, "an intimate communion with God, and great love to the people, saints and poor sinners;" and on Tuesday he "bid farewell to our loving and affectionate friends in Cincinnati," with a view to make an excursion into the country before the assembling of the conference, that no time might be lost in idleness or unnecessary recreation.

The conference commenced on Thursday, Nov. 1, and it "progressed on well" during its sessions, and they found an increase of four thousand for the past year. Bishop M'Kendree was present at this time, and on Sabbath preached to the conference and the people who assembled.

Last year a new district was formed in the Western conference, called *Indiana*, and this year two new circuits, *Cape Girrideau* and *Vincennes*, were added to it, making in all six circuits, under the charge of *Samuel Parker*, whose labors in that part of the country were rendered a blessing to many. By this it will be seen that the work was still spreading in the west, keeping pace with the growing population of the country, so that the ordinances of religion might be established simultaneously with their civil and domestic institutions.

Vincennes is the oldest town in the state, and was settled, as its name indicates, by the French, as early as 1690, at the time when that enterprising nation, to secure their American colonies from the depredations of other nations, were stretching a line of military posts and small settlements from Quebec up the St. Lawrence, and along the shores of the lakes and rivers to New Orleans. But though thus early settled, its increase for a considerable time was exceedingly slow, exhibiting none of those marks of industry and rapid population which have more recently distinguished the rising counties and states of the west. It is stated indeed, that in 1800 the entire territory of Indiana contained only five thousand six hundred and forty-one inhabitants; but in 1820, four years after it was admitted into the federal Union, it contained a population of one hundred and forty-seven thousand one hundred and seventy-eight; and in 1810, the time of which we are speaking, there were twenty-four thousand five hundred and twenty inhabitants—quite a sufficient number to demand the exertions of a gospel ministry.

The district over which Mr. Parker presided, included a large tract of country comprehending portions of Illinois, Missouri, and Indiana; and the two circuits above named, namely, Cape Girrideau and Vincennes, were traveled, the first by *Jesse Walker* and the second by *William Winans*. They must have cultivated this rugged field with considerable success, for we find in the minutes of conference for the next year, for Cape Girrideau, one hundred, and Vincennes one hundred and twenty-five members, and for the entire district, one thousand and nine.

We have mentioned that there was a great work of God in the city of New-York in the two preceding years; and perhaps from the time the Society was formed in this city, there had not been so general a revival as this. In the two years the increase of members amounted to not less than five hundred and ninety-seven, making in all, including white and colored, two thousand; and a spirit of zeal seemed to characterize the entire body of Methodists in the city, so much so that in the year 1810 two new churches were built, one in Allen, and the other in Bedford-street, known then as Greenwich village; and the good work still progressed with encouraging success in most of the churches.

In other portions of the church there were prosperous times, and generally great peace and harmony prevailed through all our borders.

Locations, however, still continued to weaken the ministry, by depriving the Church of some of its more experienced ministers; for not less than fifty-one desisted from traveling this year in the several annual conferences; twelve were returned supernumerary; ten superannuated, and two, *Reuben Hubbard* and *Clement Hickman*, withdrew, the first of whom joined the Protestant Episcopal Church, and, it is to be hoped, retained his usefulness. *Moses Black*, *Joseph Everett*, and *John Wilson* had died in the Lord.

Joseph Everett was, in many respects, a remarkable man. He was a native of Queen Ann's county, Maryland, and was born June 17th, 1732. Educated in the English Church, he was early biased in favor of her forms and ceremonies, though, as to the fundamental doctrines of the Church, or experimental

and practical religion, he was entirely indifferent, and so remained until the year 1763, when he was awakened and converted by the preaching of the "New-Lights," the followers of Mr. Whitefield. He accordingly became a member of the Presbyterian Church; but having only few associates like-minded with himself, and drinking in the doctrine of unconditional predestination, he gradually lost his religious enjoyment, and finally became more vicious than ever. In this state he continued for many years, during which time he volunteered as a soldier in the militia of Maryland in defence of his country's rights in the time of the revolutionary war; but in 1778, under the preaching of Mr. Asbury, he was aroused from his spiritual lethargy, and induced to seek again for redemption in the blood of Christ. After many hard struggles with unbelief and a rebellious heart, he was restored to the favor of God, and by consulting the able and luminous writings of Wesley and Fletcher, he was led to a new view of the plan of redemption and the way of salvation by faith in Christ, and more especially to an enlarged and more comprehensive view of the divine goodness toward our fallen world.

The result was, that he joined the Methodist Church, and in 1780 entered the traveling ministry.

Here was a new field for the exercise of his talents —and it soon appeared that he was indeed anointed of God to preach the gospel. He was eminently distinguished for the boldness, the pointedness, plainness, and energy with which he rebuked sin, and warned the sinner of his danger. And these searching appeals to the consciences of his hearers, made them tremble under the fearful apprehension of the

wrath of God, and their high responsibility to him for their conduct. Great was the success which attended his faithful admonitions; for wherever he went he was like a flame of fire darting conviction into the understanding and conscience of the ungodly, and at the same time pointing the penitent to the blood of the Lamb for pardon and salvation.

In this work he continued with untiring industry and indefatigable perseverance until, worn down with labor and toil, in 1804, he received a superannuated relation, but still bearing his pointed testimony for God as long as he was able to speak in his name, and manifesting to the last an unshaken confidence in God, and an unabated attachment to the doctrines and discipline of the church of his choice.

He died at Dr. White's, in Dorchester county, Maryland, it being the house whence he set out on his itinerant life, and on the circuit which he first traveled, on the 16th day of October, 1809, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, and thirtieth of his ministry. His last end "was peace and assurance for ever." At about twelve o'clock of the night on which he died, he awoke from a gentle slumber, and immediately broke forth in praise, shouting glory to God! In this exercise he continued for about twenty-five minutes, to the joy and astonishment of his friends, and then ceased to speak and breathe at once.

The name of Joseph Everett deserves to be enrolled among the early veterans of the cross of Christ. He joined the ranks of Methodism in its infancy in this country, and contributed largely to fix it on that broad basis on which it has since stood unshaken amid the storms and billows with which it had to contend.

It would, indeed, seem that the Methodist preachers of those days were so imbued with the spirit of their Master, and so entirely absorbed in their peculiar work, that they thought of little else but saving souls from death. And so deeply penetrated were they with the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," that their rebukes to the sinner were sometimes tremendously awful, and fearfully pointed and solemn. This was peculiarly so with Mr. Everett. His whole soul seemed to be thrown into his subject whenever he preached, and his warnings and entreaties were enough to melt the stoutest heart, while he wound the cord of truth so tightly around the sinner's conscience as to make him writhe and tremble under the wounds it inflicted. But he left him not here to welter in his blood. He presented to his troubled mind the "sin-atoning Victim," as a "balm for every wound," and as *now* ready, to "appoint to him the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." The rich promises of the gospel to penitent sinners dropped from his lips like honey descending from the honey-comb, and when believingly received by such, he rejoiced over them as a father rejoices over a returning prodigal, while with the happy believer he participated in all the fulness of perfect love.

John Wilson was an Englishman by birth, born in Poulten, Feb. 13, 1763, where he received, through the assiduity of his pious parents, a religious education, and in his youth became a member of the Methodist Society. In 1793 he emigrated to this country. After settling in the city of New-York in 1795, he received a new baptism of the Holy Spirit, and

was led on, step by step, from a class leader to a local preacher, until in 1797 he entered the traveling ministry, for which he was eminently fitted both by gifts and grace. He traveled and preached in a number of circuits with much usefulness, greatly beloved by the people, until 1803, when his ministerial labors were much restricted by an attack of asthma, from which he never fully recovered. This laid the foundation for his dissolution, on January 28th, 1810, in the forty-seventh year of his age, and thirteenth of his ministry.

In 1804 he was elected by the General Conference an assistant book agent, and in 1808 to the charge of the establishment. These offices he filled with great fidelity, for which he was well qualified by his previous habits and the course of his education. He was, indeed, a ready writer, an excellent accountant, of industrious and punctual habits, as well as of a sound judgment and courteous demeanor. He was also well skilled in his own, and in the Latin and Greek languages, and fully understood the various systems of theology with which the world abounds.

In the midst, however, of the multifarious concerns of his agency, he never forgot his obligations as a minister of the sanctuary; and if he excelled in any one branch of Christian doctrine more than another, it was in explaining and enforcing sanctification, or holiness of heart and life. This formed the theme of all his discourses, to promote which he made all the other truths of the gospel and all religious exercises subservient.

And as this trait in the Christian system engaged much of his attention in his pulpit labors, so he was

no less distinguished in his more private intercourse by the sweetness of his temper, the cheerfulness of his disposition, and the urbanity of his manners.

Bishop Asbury once said to him, in the examination of characters in the conference, "Brother Wilson, I am afraid you are not as spiritual as you used to be." He replied, with a pleasant smile upon his countenance, and a little pertness of manner, "Indeed, sir, if you had heard me preach to the Africans last Sabbath, you would alter your opinion." He then, in most respectful terms, thanked the bishop for his reproof, and promised to endeavor to profit by it.

He was, indeed, an exceedingly pleasant companion, buoyant in his spirits, and though apt at illustration by anecdotes, sometimes of a facetious character, he always took care to make them rebuke some folly, correct a foible, or exemplify the spirit of piety and Christian zeal.

In the several relations he held to the Church, he maintained the dignity of the minister of Jesus Christ, the humility and meekness of the Christian, and the strict integrity of the sound moralist. Hence those who held intercourse with him were always pleased with their reception, from the gentleness of his deportment, the blandness of his manner, and his scrupulous regard to justice, goodness, and truth, which were manifested in all his conduct. Hence he was as far removed from the hauteur of the spiritual despot as from the effeminacy of the wily sycophant. He was therefore at once beloved and respected by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance.

He died suddenly. Having prayed with his family in the evening of the 28th of January, he retired to

rest, but awoke about five o'clock in the morning and found himself suffocating from the phlegm rising in his throat, which he was unable to discharge, and in a few minutes he ceased to breathe. His previous life declares more emphatically than words could express it, that his end was peace.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	139,836	34,724	174,560	636*
Last year	131,154	31,884	163,038	597
Increase	8,682	2,840	11,522	39

1811. For several years past our country had been much agitated "with rumors of war," sometimes with France, at other times with Great Britain, and not unfrequently both assumed a belligerent attitude toward the people of America. This state of things had an unfavorable bearing upon the minds of religious people, as it led to frequent collisions on political subjects, on which the country was nearly equally divided. In the latter part of this year the note of preparation for hostile movements was sounded through the country, and Great Britain was selected as the chief object of warlike feeling.

It is not the design of this history to enter into any detail of the causes which led to this state of feeling, nor to discuss or give a judgment on the merits of the questions that were at issue, any further than they had a bearing upon the interests of pure religion. That

* This enumeration includes the supernumerary and superannuated preachers; and as they properly belong to the conferences, they will be hereafter included in the number of preachers.

strong political feeling, more especially of a partisan character, which involves heated discussions and personal recriminations, is unfriendly to the advancement of truth and righteousness, must be evident to all acquainted with human passions and the biases arising from long-cherished prejudices. And in a country where freedom of speech and of the press is allowed to all, these discussions often terminate in a settled hostility destructive of that peace and brotherly love which characterize holy and devoted Christians.

Notwithstanding these strong symptoms began to show themselves in the country about this time, attended with their usual concomitants, yet through the persevering efforts of God's servants the work in which they were engaged was generally prosperous, and many were gathered into the fold of Christ.

In the latter part of this year and beginning of 1812, the south-western part of our country, particularly Missouri and Louisiana, was terribly shaken by earthquakes, by which the minds of the people were much alarmed, and it seemed to give a temporary check to the flood of emigration, which had been setting in that direction with such astonishing rapidity. They soon recovered, however, from the shock, and the streams of emigrants resumed their wonted course, and the march of improvement went gradually on. It led, in the mean time, many to serious reflection, and thus the workings of divine Providence in the physical world were overruled for the good of its inhabitants. While the earth was trembling and quaking beneath their feet, many were induced to call on God for mercy and salvation.

It will have been perceived from the preceding

pages of this history, that in the early plantation of Methodism, especially in the new countries, the people were compelled to hold their meetings in private houses, in barns, and often in groves. As, however, the societies increased in number, it became necessary to erect houses of worship. This work, so essential to the prosperity of the cause, at first went on very slowly, particularly in the country places, and often some obscure site was selected, remote from the centre of population, where an indifferent building was erected, thus sacrificing convenience to a paltry economy. This unwise policy began to be injuriously felt in some places, and means were used to counteract it; but it was with much difficulty that the people could be generally brought to appreciate the importance of attending to this thing with that liberality and energy which its necessity demanded.

It would seem, indeed, that many of the members of our Church in some places had been accustomed to contribute so little for the support of the institutions of Christianity, that they apparently cherished the erroneous idea that they could be sustained almost literally "without money and without price." Hence the tardiness with which they came forward to build houses of worship, and the stinted manner in which they contributed for the support of the ministry and ordinances of religion.

These evils, perhaps unavoidable in some cases, in the circumstances in which they were placed, no doubt prevented a more steady and rapid growth of the societies in many places, and furnished a plausible excuse for the numerous locations we have been compelled to record.

Another defect, and which arose, in some measure, out of the ones just mentioned, was the neglecting to occupy the young and thriving villages which were rising into being by the hand of industry, in the new countries. In these countries the Methodist preachers were the gospel pioneers, and for many years, in various places, the people had no other preachers who "cared for their souls." They were accustomed to go among them in their lonely retreats, preach in their log huts, hold their quarterly meetings in barns or in the woods, and they seemed to have been so long accustomed to this mode of preaching and living, that they almost forgot, in many instances, to provide themselves with better accommodations; and before they were aware of it, other denominations came, took possession of the villages, erected houses of worship, and thus drew the weightier part of population around them. How much has been lost to the Methodist Episcopal Church by this neglect, who can tell? Latterly, however, a remedy has been, in some measure at least, provided, though it has been, in too many instances, after the damage had been sustained, and we have profited more by our losses than by prudent foresight.

Another inconvenience began to be sensibly felt, and that was the want of parsonages for the accommodation of preachers' families. It is true that the General Conference of 1800, at the suggestion of Dr. Coke, had passed a resolution, recommending to the circuits to prepare convenient houses, and to have them furnished with heavy furniture. But, excepting some of the larger cities, this recommendation had been little heeded, and hence those preachers who had

families were obliged either to locate or submit to the inconvenience of moving their families to circuits without having any place provided for them, or were compelled to purchase or hire a permanent residence for their families, and then go wherever they might be sent, however distant from their residences. These evils began to press heavily upon the connection, and it was plainly seen that, unless removed, must eventually very much impede, if not entirely stop, the wheels of the itinerancy.

In the early days of Methodism, as most of the traveling preachers were unmarried, these embarrassments were not so sensibly realized; and in most instances the zeal for God's house so entirely "eat up" the cares of this world, that those devoted men of God seemed regardless of their fare, "counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus;" for the sake of winning souls to him they were willing to forego, not only the riches and honors of the world, but also all the endearments of domestic life.

At this time the case was somewhat altered. Many had families, some of them large and growing. To move these from place to place, without having a house prepared to shelter them, was an inconvenience, and more especially with the scanty allowance provided for their support, to which many thought themselves not called to submit. This, no doubt, was one cause of the numerous locations from one year to another. And though the embarrassments arising from this source are not yet wholly removed, yet the efforts which began to be put forth about this time, and which have been continued with various degrees of

success, have supplied a partial remedy, and it is to be hoped that the efforts will not be slackened until every station and circuit shall have its parsonage, suitably furnished and comfortably supplied with the necessaries of life.

But with all these disadvantages, many parts of the country were visited with outpourings of the Spirit of God, so that the work steadily advanced both in the Atlantic and in the northern and western states.

This year Bishop Asbury crossed the St. Lawrence into Upper Canada. After attending the New-England conference, which assembled this year in Barnard, in the state of Vermont, he took his departure on his intended tour into Upper Canada, a place he had long desired to visit. On Wednesday, June 26th, he crossed the Green Mountains, visited Middlebury, and preached in the court house, and afterward set forward a subscription paper for building a house of worship in that place, fully believing, as he said, that "the Lord would visit Middlebury." He then passed on through Vergennes, Charlotte, and Plattsburgh, in each of which places he stopped and preached, until he arrived, after a fatiguing journey through the woods and swampy roads, at the Indian village of *St. Regis*, situated at the mouth of the river of that name, which empties into the St. Lawrence river. At this place he was ferried across the St. Lawrence, which is here nearly three miles in width. The first place he stopped at was Evan Roy's in the town of Cornwall, where there was a flourishing Methodist Society, one of the oldest in the province.

On landing in Canada, he says, "My strong affection for the people of the United States came with

strange power upon me when I was crossing the line," and he inquires, with much apparent feeling, "Why should I have such new feelings in Canada?" No doubt that associations were called up by this visit which he little expected to realize in this world. He had left his native land in his youth—had struggled through the difficulties of the revolutionary war—a war which eventuated in the severance of the United States from the land of his birth—had lived to see these states rising and flourishing, and the Church whose affairs he had been called to superintend, numbering within its bosom six hundred and thirty-six traveling preachers, and 174,560 members—and now, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and fortieth of his ministry in this country, he found himself once more under the shadow of his paternal government, in a distant province of the empire, among a people who had been raised up by his sons in the gospel, professing the same faith and adopting the same modes of worship with those with whom he first united himself in the mother country. Amid such reflections, how could it be otherwise than that "strange feelings should come over" him? And more especially as he must then have anticipated the near approach of another war between the United States and that government from which he had expatriated himself for the sake of building up His kingdom whose government shall have no end.

The bishop passed along up the banks of the St. Lawrence, stopping and preaching in the most considerable places, gathering information from his own observation and the communications of others respecting the state of things in Canada, until he arrived at

Kingston, where he preached in a new chapel the people had erected in that place. He says :—"Our ride has brought us through one of the finest countries I have ever seen. The timber is of a noble size; the cattle are well shaped and well looking; the crops are abundant, on a most fruitful soil. Surely, this is a land that God the Lord hath blessed." And of the people he says :—"My soul is much united to them."

On Monday July 15th, he left Kingston, and crossed the lake in an open boat, in which he says they "had a tremendous passage," to Sacketts Harbor. After his arrival, he remarks :—"Well, I have been to Canada, and find it like all other stations in the extremities—there are difficulties to overcome, and prospects to cheer us. Some of our laborers have not been so faithful and diligent as we could wish." On meeting with his colleague in the episcopacy, he says :—"My spirit rejoiced on meeting with dear Bishop M'Kendree"—and they jointly attended the Genesee Conference, which assembled on the 20th of July at Paris, Oneida county, in the state of New-York.

From this conference the bishops shaped their course through the western parts of New-York and Pennsylvania, to Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee, and thence through the southern states; preaching to the people, and attending the conferences as usual. Speaking of the South Carolina Conference, Bishop Asbury remarks :—"Scarcely have I seen such harmony and love."—"I received letters from the extremities, and the centre of our vast continent, all pleasing, all encouraging."

During this long and tedious journey, the bishop

speaks of suffering much from bodily affliction, sometimes to that degree, from an obstinate inflammation in his foot, that he could scarcely walk, and at other times he was obliged to desist from active labor altogether, not being able either to ride or preach. In these seasons, however, he employed himself in reading, prayer, and meditation, and in answering the numerous letters he was almost daily receiving from the presiding elders and others; for it may be observed that it was one part of the duty of a presiding elder to give information to the bishops, once a year at least, of the state of religion in his district. This, together with other correspondence, imposed no small tax upon the time and labor of the bishop to answer, as he was in the habit of doing, all these letters. But in the midst of all these things, he says:—"I limped about, sung, talked, and prayed."—"My consolations exceedingly abound, though my sufferings are great."—"Dr. Coke says fifteen hundred miles in nine weeks—I may say sixteen hundred miles in sixty days." Such were episcopal labors in those days!

These extensive travels were less or more the practice of most of the preachers in the new countries, with only this difference, that these latter were performing their regular round of duties in a circuit from two to four hundred miles in circumference, once in four weeks. As late as 1810, according to the testimony of a writer in the Pittsburgh Conference Journal, in the Monongahela district, then under the charge of Rev. *Joshua Monroe*, there were eleven circuits, comprehending all the country from lake Erie southward, to the head of Tyger's Valley, and from

the summit of the Alleghany mountains to the Ohio river, including a portion of western Virginia, the whole of western Pennsylvania, and a considerable portion of the north-east corner of the state of Ohio. At that time Pittsburgh was in a circuit which embraced Greensburgh, Somerset, and Connellsville, in which there were four hundred and twenty-eight members of the Church. In Pittsburgh itself, in which there are now two large churches, with a membership of about one thousand three hundred, the Methodists assembled at that time in a private room prepared for that purpose, and had only about forty church members, and some of even these were from the adjacent country In Meadville, (where we now have a college and a stationed preacher,) in Erie, Mercer, and Franklin, all which were then included in Erie circuit, there were no societies.

This year, 1811, Erie circuit employed two preachers, *James Watts* and *James Ewen*, and the number of church members had increased to five hundred and one, scattered over an extent of country which now includes several presiding elders' districts.

The Pittsburgh circuit, which was this year under the charge of *James M. Hanson*, numbered five hundred and twenty-four members, though the Society in the city was still small. Within the limits of these two circuits, there is now a large portion of two annual conferences, five entire districts, besides parts of some others, and not less than twenty-two thousand members of the Church. So greatly has the work enlarged in that field which was brought under culture by those men of God. It has since been divided and subdivided into smaller and more compact enclo-

sures, and put under the care of a proportionate number of husbandmen, that it might bring forth fruit more abundantly, and that its fruit may remain.

Forty-five preachers located this year, nineteen were returned supernumerary, fifteen superannuated, and two expelled. Five, namely, *Thomas Daughaday*, *Thomas Budd*, *William Keith*, *William Hunt*, and *Gideon A. Knowlton*, ended their labors in peace, leaving behind them many testimonials to their fidelity and success in the "ministry of reconciliation."

One trait in the character of William Keith, mentioned in the notice of his death, is worthy of remembrance and of imitation—that is, "clearness of conception, readiness of utterance, and comprehensiveness of argument. It has often been remarked that he possessed the happy art of expressing much useful matter in a few well-chosen words." It is added, "The happy, and sometimes astonishing effects of his ministry, demonstrated that he was sent by Jesus Christ to declare unto mankind the awful truths of Heaven, and to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God."

There was indeed a sweetness of manner, a persuasiveness of argument, which accompanied the public administrations of William Keith, that wrought upon the heart of the auditor, attracted his attention, and won his affection, in a manner which he could hardly resist. His intelligent countenance, the melody of his voice, the harmony of his sentences, and above all, the apparent sincerity with which he spoke, commanded the respect and inspired the confidence of all who were not prejudiced against the truth; and even many of these, on hearing him, have been overcome by the charming and persuasive eloquence with which he

addressed them. He was, as was most evident, deeply imbued with the spirit of his Master, and this gave an unction and a pungency to all he said.

In the early part of his ministry he was employed chiefly in western New-York; and for some cause, unknown to the writer, he was induced to leave the Methodist Church and connect himself with another communion. He very soon, however, repented of his error, published a recantation, and was most cordially readmitted into the bosom of the church of his first love. He could hardly ever forgive himself this step, but adverted to it upon his dying bed as a source of grief to his mind.

The two last years of his ministry he spent in New-York, and the people appreciated his labors highly as a faithful and useful minister of Jesus Christ. Here also he ended his days with a lingering consumption, beloved and respected by all who knew him, leaving a testimony behind him more satisfactory than all the gold of Ophir—for he departed in the full hope of immortality and eternal life.

Of William Hunt, it is said that he professed to enjoy, and exemplified the grace of "perfect love"—that few excelled him in the branches of learning which he pursued—that he was thoroughly versed in the sacred Scriptures—sound in doctrine, and an accurate judge of gospel order and discipline, illustrating in his own life the purity and excellence of that religion which he recommended to others.

In addition to his exhibiting the graces of a Christian minister, it is said of Gideon A. Knowlton that he was so remarkably distinguished for his punctuality in attending to his appointments, that it became pro-

verbial among the people in stormy weather, "It is Knowlton's appointment; he will be there; we must attend." How worthy of imitation!

Of Thomas Budd, it is said that he possessed strong natural abilities, had an improved mind, was remarkably frank in his manner, and of the strictest integrity in all his conduct.

Thomas Daughaday was an acceptable and useful preacher, manifesting an ardent thirst for the salvation of souls, and was an example of meekness and patience in his life, and departed full of the hope of immortality.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	148,835	35,732	184,567	668
Last year	139,836	34,724	174,560	636
Increase	8,999	1,008	10,007	32

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

The first Delegated General Conference of 1812.

We have traced the progress of Methodism from its origin to the present period. We have seen it beginning in a small class consisting of only five members in the city of New-York, and under the auspices of divine providence and grace, growing up to a considerable society, and chiefly by the instrumentality of a local preacher who had little to recommend him to public favor but the sincerity of his zeal, the

fervor of his piety, and the influence he derived from his connection with such a man as John Wesley; and thence breaking out, under the labors of Boardman and Pilmoor, and the more energetic exertions of Asbury, into circuits and quarterly meeting conferences; until, in imitation of the practice which had obtained in Europe, a regular conference was convened in Philadelphia under the superintendence of Rankin. As it continued to enlarge its dimensions by means of the labors of these men, their coadjutors, and suc cessors, this conference became divided and subdivided into several others, until it was found expedient to concentrate the councils of the church in one General Conference, composed of all the traveling elders who might be disposed to attend.

As, however, the work continued to expand in every direction until it became co-extensive with the settlements which were spread over this large country, comprehending the cities and villages, the denser population of the older and the sparser settlements of the new states and territories, to prevent a useless expenditure of time, labor, and money, as well as to secure greater harmony in counsel and despatch of business, it was found necessary to lessen the number who should compose this General Conference, by selecting a specific number from among the elders of each annual conference. To bring all the traveling elders together, scattered as they were among the circuits and stations from Maine to Louisiana, and thence along the waters of the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio, and their tributary streams; the shores of lakes Erie and Ontario and the banks of the St Lawrence to Montreal and Quebec, would be involv-

ing an expense of time and money which neither preachers nor people were able to bear, or if able, they could give no reasonable account for such a waste of expenditure. On the other hand, if those in the extreme parts of the work were deterred from attending the General Conference, on account of the difficulties arising from distance or poverty, or from the hazards to the souls of the people by such a long absence from their charge, then the affairs of the Church would be left in the hands of some of the most central of the annual conferences, who might not understand the circumstances and wants of their brethren in the exterior parts of the work. Every consideration, therefore, of justice and expediency, dictated the policy of the measure which, in 1808, provided for a delegated General Conference.

This conference assembled in the city of New-York, on the first day of May, 1812. And as this is the first delegated General Conference, the reader will doubtless be pleased to have the names of the delegates, which are here given as they stand on the Journal of the conference. They are as follows:—

New-York Conference.

Freeborn Garrettson,	Laban Clark,
Daniel Ostrander,	Truman Bishop,
Aaron Hunt,	Eben Smith,
William Phoebus,	Henry Stead,
William Anson,	Billy Hibbard,
Nathan Bangs,	Seth Crowell,

Samuel Merwin.

New-England Conference.

George Pickering,	Elijah Hedding,
Oliver Beale,	Joshua Soule,

William Stephens, Solomon Sias,
Asa Kent, Joel Winch,

Daniel Webb.

Genesee Conference.

William B. Lacy, James Kelsey,
Anning Owen, Elijah Batchelor,
Timothy Lee, William Snow.

Western Conference.

Lawner Blackman, Isaac Quinn,
Benjamin Lakin, William Houston,
James Quinn, John Collins,
Frederick Stier, Samuel Parker,
John Sale, James Axley,
William Pattison, David Young,

Thomas Stillwell.

South Carolina Conference.

Lewis Myers, William M. Kennedy,
Lovick Pierce, Samuel Dunwody,
Joseph Tarpley, James E. Glenn,
Daniel Asbury, Hilliard Judge,

Joseph Travis.

Virginia Conference.

Jesse Lee, James M. Boyd,
Philip Bruce, Richard Lattimore,
John Buxton, Charles Callaway,
Thomas L. Douglass, Cannellum H. Hines,
John Ballew, William Jean,

John Early.

Baltimore Conference.

Nelson Reed, Asa Shin,
Joseph Toy, Hamilton Jefferson,
Joshua Wells, Jacob Gruber,
Nicholas Snethen, Robert R Roberts,
Enoch George, William Ryland,

Christopher Frye,	Robert Burch,
James Smith,	Henry Smith.

Andrew Hemphill.

Philadelphia Conference.

Ezekiel Cooper,	David Bartine,
John M'Claskey,	John Walker,
Tho. F. Sargent,	George Woolley,
Stephen G. Roszel,	James Bateman,
Thomas Ware,	Thomas Burch,
Richard Sneath,	Michael Coate,
Thomas Boring,	Asa Smith.

Bishops Asbury and M'Kendree were present, and the conference was opened by the former, by reading a portion of the Holy Scriptures and prayer; after which the names of the delegates were called by a temporary secretary, and they presented the certificates of their election by the several annual conferences. This being finished, Daniel Hitt, the book agent, not being one of the delegates, was elected secretary.

This being a delegated conference, acting under the restrictions imposed upon it by the body by which it was constituted, it was found necessary to frame a set of new rules to guide the members in their deliberations and decisions. A committee was accordingly appointed for the purpose of preparing rules, and a long time was spent in discussing and adopting them, and after they were adopted, being an abridgment of the congressional rules found in Jefferson's Manual, they were to the conference something like Saul's armor to David: they did not like them; and they have long since been laid aside as not only useless but perplexing. Men of plain common sense, acting with a simple desire to accomplish the greatest

good by the use of the best means, need but a few plain and simple rules, easily understood, to guide them in their action.

After the adoption of the rules, and the transaction of some other preliminary business, a letter (a copy of which I have not been able to find) from Dr. Coke was read to the conference, expressive of his determination to visit the East Indies on a grand missionary enterprise, and of his unabated attachment to his American brethren.* After this, Bishop M'Kendree presented the conference with the following address, which was the first time that either of the presidents submitted his views to the conference in writing :—

"*To the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, now assembled in the city of New-York.*

"DEAR BRETHREN :—My relation to you, and the connection in general, seems, in my opinion, to make it necessary that I should address you in some way, by which you may get possession of some information, perhaps not otherwise to be obtained by many of you.

"It is now four years since, by your appointment, it became my duty jointly to superintend our extensive and very important charge. With anxious solicitude, and good wishes, I have looked forward to this General Conference. The appointed time is come, and the Lord has graciously permitted us to meet according to appointment, for which I hope we are prepared jointly to praise and adore his goodness.

* As I speak from memory only, I may have mistaken the contents of this letter, but think I am correct. The letter, I believe, was addressed to Bishop Asbury, which, doubtless, is the reason why it is not found among the documents of the conference.

"Upon examination, you will find the work of the Lord is prospering in our hands. Our important charge has greatly increased since the last General Conference: we have had an increase of nearly forty thousand members. At present, we have about one hundred and ninety thousand members, upward of two thousand local, and about seven hundred traveling preachers, in our connection, and these widely scattered over seventeen states, besides the Canadas and several of the territorial settlements.

"Thus situated, it must be expected, in the present state of things, that the counsel and direction of your united wisdom will be necessary to preserve the harmony and peace of the body, as well as co-operation of the traveling and local ministry, in carrying on the blessed work of reformation which the Lord has been pleased to effect, through our instrumentality. To deserve the confidence of the local ministry and membership, as well as to retain confidence in ourselves, and in each other, is undoubtedly our duty; and if we consider that those who are to confide in us are a collection from all classes and descriptions from all countries of which the nation is composed, promiscuously scattered over this vast continent, men who were originally of different educations, manners, habits, and opinions, we shall see the difficulty as well as the importance of this part of our charge.

"In order to enjoy the comforts of peace and union among us, we must 'love one another;' but this cannot abide where confidence does not exist; and purity of intention, manifested by proper actions, is the very foundation and support of confidence; thus, 'united, we stand;' each member is a support to the body, and the body supports each member; but if confidence fails, love will grow cold, peace will be broken, and 'divided, we fall.' It therefore becomes this body, which, by its example, is to move the passions and direct the course of thousands of minis-

ters, and tens of thousands of members, to pay strict attention to the simplicity of gospel manners, and to do every thing as in the immediate presence of God. If we consider the nature of our business, and the influence of civil governments, and political measures, it will hardly be expected that every individual in so large a body as you form will continually be sufficiently and strictly evangelical in all cases; it is therefore hoped in cases of failure, that the wisdom and firmness of your united prudence as a body will counteract evil effects by a well-ordered and prudent disapprobation and better example. Church and state should never be assimilated.

"Connected as I am with you, and the connection in general, I feel it a part of my duty to submit to your consideration the appointment of the Genesee Conference; and perhaps it may be for the general good, if, in your wisdom you should think proper to take into consideration a division of the work in the western country, and a proper arrangement of the work in general; and the magnitude and extent of the work which the Lord has graciously pleased to prosper in our hands, may make it proper for you to inquire if the work is sufficiently within the oversight of the superintendency, and to make such arrangements and provision as your wisdom may approve. I would also suggest the necessity of keeping in view, not only the traveling, but the relation and situation of our local brethren; and to pursue that plan which may render the whole the most useful; and it may also be proper to bring into view any unfinished business (if any) which we had under consideration at our last General Conference. Hitherto, as a body, we have been preserved, by our well-digested system of rules, which are as sinews to the body, and form the bonds of our union. But it is evident, both from Scripture and experience, that men, even good men, may depart from first principles and the best of rules; it

may therefore be proper for you to pay some attention to the administration, to know the state both of the traveling and local ministry, as it relates to doctrine, discipline, and practice.

"Before I conclude, permit me, my dear brethren, to express a few thoughts concerning the view I have of the relation in which I stand connected with this body. It is only by virtue of a delegated power from the General Conference, that I hold the reins of government. I consider myself bound by virtue of the same authority to exercise discipline in perfect conformity to the rules of the Church, to the best of my ability and judgment. I consider myself justly accountable, not for the system of government, but for my administration, and ought therefore to be ready to answer in General Conference for past conduct, and be willing to receive information and advice, to perfect future operations: and I wish my brethren to feel themselves perfectly easy and at liberty.

"I shall take the liberty here to present my grateful acknowledgments for the high degree of confidence which my beloved brethren have placed in me, and especially for the able counsel and seasonable support afforded by many, which has, I believe, with the divine aid, preserved and supported me. Dear brethren, such are the effects of our high responsibility, connected with a consciousness of the insufficiency of my talents for so great a work, that I move with trembling. Your eyes and the eyes of the Lord are upon me for good. We shall rejoice together to see the armies of Israel wisely conducted in all their ranks, carrying the triumphs of the Redeemer's kingdom to the ends of the earth; and the Lord will rejoice to make his ministers a flame of fire. In you I have confidence, and on you I depend for aid, and above all, I trust in divine aid. Influenced by these considerations, and with my situation in full view, I cannot entertain a thought of bearing such

awful accountability longer than I am persuaded my services are useful to the Church of God, and feel a confidence of being aided by your counsel and support, which is with you to give in any way or form you judge proper. And while I join with you, my dear brethren, in pure gospel simplicity, to commit and recommend ourselves and our several charges to the special care of the great Head of the Church, I remain, with sentiments of love and confidence, your servant in the gospel of Christ,

"WM. M'KENDREE.

"*New-York, May 5th*, 1812."

This address was referred to appropriate committees, after which Bishop Asbury, addressing himself extemporaneously to Bishop M'Kendree, and through him to the conference, gave a historical sketch of the rise and progress of Methodism in this country, its present state and prospects, and concluded by urging upon the General Conference the expediency of increasing the number of annual conferences for the convenience of the preachers, and as a measure of economy to the whole Church; and the committees were instructed to take these matters into consideration, in connection with the several portions of Bishop M'Kendree's address.

After a full interchange of thoughts in reference to adding one more to the number of bishops, as recommended by Bishop M'Kendree, as it was understood he intended by the question "whether the work is sufficiently within the oversight of the superintendency," the committee reported that they "did not see their way clear to recommend any alteration or additions," which was concurred in by the conference.

Bishop Asbury had, previous to the session of this

conference, expressed a desire once more to visit his native land, from which he had now been absent about forty-one years; and in his communication to the conference he requested them to give him their advice on the propriety of his doing it soon after the adjournment of conference. The committee on the episcopacy, having reported against increasing the number of bishops, say in reference to this subject:—"It is our sincere desire and request, that Bishop Asbury would relinquish his thoughts of visiting Europe, and confine his labors to the American connection so long as God may preserve his life." In this the conference fully concurred, and the bishop cheerfully relinquished his design.

In regard to creating the Genesee conference, respecting which some had demurred on account of the illegality of the measure, as they alleged, the conference voted in its favor, and thus justified the bishops in what they had done in the premises.

In respect to the division of the work in the western country, which was earnestly recommended by both the bishops, the conference consented to divide the Western conference into two, to be called the *Ohio* and *Tennessee* conferences; the former to comprehend the Salt river, Kentucky, Miami, and Muskingum districts; the latter, the Holston, Nashville, Cumberland, Wabash, and Illinois districts; and then gave authority to the bishops, in the interval of the General Conference, if they should find it necessary, to establish another conference down the Mississippi, provided that no circuit or district shall be incorporated in such conference, without its consent—a precaution that marks the jealousy with which the

General Conference guarded the rights of annual conferences, against what they considered the encroachments of episcopal prerogative—and also a disposition, frequently exemplified before, to comprehend as large a territory as possible within the bounds of each annual conference, however inconvenient it might be to preachers and people—a mistaken policy, it is believed, which has been since gradually rectified.

The most important act of this General Conference was the making *local deacons* eligible to the office of *elders*. This measure elicited a very strong debate, in which the talent of the most able members was brought into requisition, both for and against it. Those who were in favor of the measure, contended that the services of such were needed in the various parts of the work, where the number of traveling elders were few, to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to perform the ceremony of marriage and burial of the dead;—that being recognized by our church as ministers of the gospel, they were also entitled, equally with their traveling brethren, to full powers as elders in the Church of God;—and, as conferring them would add dignity and importance to their character, it would also increase their usefulness, and consequently attach them more strongly to their traveling brethren.

To this it was answered that the ordination service implied a covenant transaction, in which the person receiving orders took upon himself the charge of the flock of Christ, which a local elder in our Church could not do, and therefore could not fulfil his covenant obligations, inasmuch as he did not, nor could he as a mere local minister, devote himself exclusively

to the work of the ministry;—that as to the right he had to full orders, we must distinguish between original, unalienable, and acquired rights, between civil, political, and ecclesiastical rights. As to original or natural right, no one pretended that a local or any other preacher had it;—as to acquired, according to the economy of our Church he could not acquire it, because no such provision had been made as the reward of services, however meritorious, this being reserved for traveling preachers alone, who sacrificed their all of temporal emolument and devoted themselves entirely to the service of the Church;—as to civil or political right, he could claim none, as the civil polity of our country did not interfere in religious matters at all;—and therefore it only remained to inquire whether our local deacons had an ecclesiastical right to the order of elders; and this was the very question at issue, and therefore they could have none until it be given to them by the Church to which they belong. The question then must be decided, it was contended, on the principles of expediency and the probable utility of the measure; and the majority finally decided that the privilege ought to be granted them on this ground—*they might be needed*, and *might therefore be useful*.

Having thus decided in favor of granting them elders' orders, the following regulations were adopted as the conditions on which the bishops were permitted to confer them, which show plainly that this privilege was granted solely on the presumption that in every case where ordinations of this character were allowed, there was an imperious call for the services of such elders, and not because they could claim them as a

right originating from their relation to the Church. The regulations were as follows:—

"A local deacon shall be eligible to the office of an elder, and on the following regulations and restrictions, viz., he shall have preached four years from the time he was ordained a deacon; and shall obtain a recommendation of two-thirds from the quarterly conference of which he is a member, signed by the president and countersigned by the secretary, certifying his qualifications in doctrine, discipline, talents, and usefulness; and the necessity of the official services of such local elder in the circuit where he resides. He shall, if he cannot be present, send to the annual conference a note certifying his belief in the doctrine and discipline of our Church: the whole being examined and approved by the annual conference, he shall be ordained. Provided that no slaveholder shall be eligible to the office of local elder, in any state or territory where the civil laws will admit emancipation, and suffer the liberated slave to enjoy his freedom."

The following item was added to the section respecting the settlement of disputes which might arise among brethren in the Church:—

"Whenever a complaint is made against any member of our church for the nonpayment of debt: when the accounts are adjusted, and the amount properly ascertained, the preacher having the charge shall call the debtor before a committee of at least three, to say why he does not make payment; and if further time is requested, the committee shall determine whether it ought to be granted, and what security, or if any, should be given, to secure the payment; and in case the debtor should refuse to comply, he shall be expelled: but in such case shall have the privilege of appealing to the quarterly meeting conference, who shall

decide on the case, and their decision shall be final. And in case the creditor shall complain that justice is not done him, he shall have the privilege of laying his grievance before the quarterly-meeting conference, who shall decide on the case, and the decision shall be final; and in case the creditor refuse to comply, he shall be expelled."

The necessity of publishing a periodical work was strongly urged upon this conference by some of its leading members, and strenuously opposed by others. The subject was referred to the consideration of the committee on the Book Concern, and they finally recommended, and the conference concurred, "That the book agents be directed to resume the publication of the Methodist Magazine, two volumes having been published" (namely, in 1789 and 1790,) "to commence publishing the third volume at farthest by January next." And with a view to secure this object, an additional agent was appointed, Daniel Hitt being re-elected the principal, and Thomas Ware the assistant agent. The mandate of the conference, however, was never obeyed, and unhappily for the literature and character of the Methodist Episcopal Church, we had no Magazine, nor scarcely any publication of American growth, until 1818, when the Methodist Magazine was recommenced.

This is the more to be regretted, because it occasions a dearth of materials for such a history of this period as is most desirable, and which is now most painfully felt. For though some numbers of the Magazine abound in rich material for history, especially those sketches furnished by Theophilus Arminius and some others, to which I have been much indebted for many facts and graphic descriptions of

Methodism in the west, yet these and others of a similar character generally terminate about the year 1812, and we in vain look for anything satisfactory out of the ordinary records of the Church, from that time to about the year 1820. This period, therefore, quite contrary to my expectations when I commenced writing, seems to be the most barren of interesting incidents and those historical details which are essential to render history engaging and edifying, of any period of our Church.

During a number of years, it appears that education of all sorts, as well as writing for the public eye, was laid aside as useless, and we seem to have come to the strange conclusion that we had nought else to do but simply to preach the gospel, and attend to those other duties connected with the pastoral office, in order to insure the blessing of God on our labors; hence the Magazine had been discontinued for more than twenty years, and scarcely anything issued from our press except what was imported from Europe, and much of this, even, was brought before the public through other mediums.* Here and there a small

* It is true we had a book-room, and the books which had been issued from it from time to time had done much good; but to show the meager state of this concern about this time, I will append a list of all the variety of books which were on sale or issued from our press, as I find it in Crowther's Portraiture of Methodism in 1813, together with the price of each volume:—

"Coke's Commentary on New Testament, -	$20 00†
Wesley's Notes on do. - -	3 00
Wesley's Sermons, 9 vols., - - -	6 50
Wood's Dictionary, 2 do. - - -	5 00

† This was imported from Europe, though afterward re published in this country.

pamphlet made its appearance, but only to disappear generally before it had time to breathe the breath of life; for it seemed to be taken for granted that American Methodists were doomed to that state of nonage which unfitted them to instruct one another through the medium of the press.

It is true that a few sighed over this state of things in secret, and sometimes vented their feelings to each other, in accents of sorrow and regret, but they almost despaired of obtaining redress. It was this feeling which prompted them to bring this subject before the General Conference in 1812; but though they suc-

Fletcher's Checks, 6 vols.,	$5 00
Benson's Life of Fletcher,	1 00
Portraiture of Methodism,	1 00
Experience of several eminent Methodist preachers, 2 vols., $1 each,	2 00
The Saints' Everlasting Rest,	1 00
Methodist Hymns, 2 vols. bound together,	00 87½
Law's Serious Call to a Holy Life,	00 75
Experience and Letters of Hester A. Rogers,	00 75
Fletcher's Appeal,	00 75
Abbott's Life,	00 75
Alleine's Alarm and Baxter's Call,	00 50
Family Adviser and Primitive Physic,	00 50
Methodist Discipline,	00 37½
Extract from John Nelson's Journal,	00 37½
Watters' Life,	00 37½
Confessions of James Lackington,	00 25
Truth Vindicated,	00 31¼
Thomas à Kempis,	00 31¼
Mrs. Rowe's Devout Exercises, abridged,	00 25
A Scriptural Catechism,	00 6¼

And in this list, the whole of which—that is, a copy of each volume—independently of Coke's Commentary, which was imported—might be purchased for $29 75, there are but three American publications, namely, Abbotts' and Watters' Life, and the Scriptural Catechism. Nor was it possible, under the

ceeded in getting a bare majority so far to second their views as to order the resumption of the Methodist Magazine, yet such was the general apathy on this subject, that the agents either refused to obey the order of the conference, or could not obtain sufficient encouragement to justify them in the enterprise; and either alternative proves a lamentable state of things in regard to literature and science among us at that time.

One consequence resulting from this inertness in reference to periodical literature and other branches of mental improvement, was, that when assailed by our adversaries—and this was not unfrequently the case—we had no adequate means of defence; and hence the reading public were left to draw their inferences respecting Methodist doctrine and economy from the distorted representations of those who felt it a duty to caricature or present us in a false position. These things were irksome, yet they were unavoidable under the circumstances.

From these humiliating facts it became proverbial that the "Methodists were enemies to learning," and it must be confessed that there was too much reason

circumstances—for to our certain knowledge several attempts were made—to increase the variety; such was the low state of feeling in the heads of the department, and the apathy in general on the subject of literature in our Church at that period. And be it remembered that the above books had been issued so repeatedly without adding anything to the variety, that it is believed if the Concern had gone on at this rate much longer, it would have run down for want of pecuniary support.

The improvement, however, so much needed in this department, begun soon after, and has been gradually increasing ever since, as may be seen in the account given of this establishment in a subsequent chapter.

for the taunting remark; and it was not without much labor that the reproach has been, in some measure at least, rolled away from us.

The fact is, that the destruction of Cokesbury College, and the failure in attempting to establish district schools and academies, seemed to throw a damper upon the spirits of those who had abetted learning, and to furnish those who were either inimical or indifferent to its interests with arguments against it; while the bungling attempts of some, who prematurely sent their ill-digested effusions into the world, disgusted all men of correct taste and wise discernment with their puerile productions. These causes operated conjointly to frustrate all attempts to revive the spirits of those who felt the necessity of furnishing our brethren and friends with that character of literature which the state of the Church and of society generally imperiously demanded.

Add to this, as an apology for the neglect, that many of our preachers were most assiduously engaged in the frontier settlements, preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the poor in log huts, and had therefore neither the time nor the means to devote to literary pursuits; and it seemed to others, that all the pecuniary means at command were needed to supply the immediate wants of those who were thus engaged in winning souls to Jesus Christ from among the outcasts of men. In this most praiseworthy work they were eminently blessed.

But whatever may have been the cause, or how reasonable soever may have been the excuse, for suffering ourselves to be for so long a time destitute of a medium of instruction and information, and of me-

tual edification, such are the facts in the case, and such are their consequences upon this portion of the Church's history. That a brighter day has dawned upon us in this respect is matter of congratulation among all the friends of the Church, of religion, science, and morals.

In 1810 Mr. Lee's History of the Methodists made its appearance; but it by no means satisfied the friends of the cause, and the General Conference of 1808, to which the manuscript was submitted, had reported adverse to its merits. To secure, therefore, a more perfect history of the Church was the anxious desire of Bishop Asbury and many others. To effect this object the subject had been submitted to the annual conferences, and they had appointed some members of their own body to collect facts and historical incidents for a future history, and to bring or forward them to this General Conference. Some few were presented, and they were referred to a committee to examine and report thereon. On examination it was found that though some of the facts collected were valuable, yet, on the whole, they were considered meagre and unsatisfactory. This appears evident from the following remark of the committee:—

"We are of opinion that the letters submitted to us for examination contain some valuable information, and good materials for a history of Methodism; as far as they go; but we think they are not sufficiently full on different points."

After this the committee go on to state their views of the sort of materials which they considered essential to form a complete history, such as accounts of the state of the country and the time when Methodism

was introduced; its difficulties and success; biographical sketches of eminent preachers and others, &c., &c.; and then they recommend that each annual conference should appoint a committee of three to collect the needful information, directing that the presiding elders and preachers be instructed to aid in this work; and then the New-York conference was authorized to engage a historian to digest and arrange the materials thus furnished, and prepare them for the press. In this report the conference fully concurred.

All this was very well. But like many other good schemes which are never executed, merely because left to many hands, without any individual who should be responsible for its execution, this proved an abortion. Nothing effectual was ever done in the premises. Yet the adoption of this report by the General Conference had its use. It no doubt served to direct the attention of individuals to this subject, and to call forth the talents of those brethren who have at different times since written those sketches of Methodism to which the present history is much indebted.

The following clause was added to the section on the legal settlement of church property:—

"But each annual conference is authorized to make such modification in the deeds as they may find the different usages and customs of law require in the different states or territories, so as to secure the premises firmly, by deed, and permanently, to the Methodist Episcopal Church, according to the true intent and meaning of the following form of a deed of settlement, any thing in the said form to the contrary notwithstanding."

The conference ordered that every "local elder,

deacon, and preacher shall have his name recorded on the journal of the quarterly meeting conference of which he is a member."

Hitherto the stewards of the circuits had been appointed by the preacher in charge; but this conference resolved that the nomination of the preacher should be submitted to the quarterly-meeting conference, for its concurrence or rejection, and likewise made the stewards amenable to said conference for their official conduct.

A memorial having been presented from the quarterly meeting conference in the city of New-York, praying the General Conference to adopt some means to raise a fund for the relief of the members of conference, it was resolved, after considerable discussion,

"That each annual conference shall be authorized to raise, if they think proper, a fund, as in their wisdom they shall see fit, to be considered a fund for the relief of the wives, widows, and children of traveling preachers, and also for the relief of supernumerary and superannuated preachers, and affording supplies for missionary purposes."

This is the first action which I have found on the records of the conference especially regarding missions; and the reason is, not because the conference was at any time indifferent to the situation of those portions of the country which were destitute of the gospel, but because the whole system of Methodism had been very justly considered missionary in its character from the beginning; but now so many inconveniences, not to say suffering embarrassments, had been realized from the poverty of the preachers, and also of the people in the new settlements, that the attention of some had

become awakened to the importance of affording pecuniary relief, more effectually than it could be in the ordinary way, to those who were thus destitute, and to those who were willing and desirous to supply them with the ordinances of religion. And though this was but an incipient step, it led finally to more important results, which will be noticed at the proper time.

In respect to the fund which the annual conferences were authorized to raise for the relief of worn-out preachers, widows, and children, several of the conferences have availed themselves of it at different times, under such regulations as they deemed expedient, some under the control of conference, and others by forming a society exclusively of such members as chose to become subscribers to the institution. But with all these helps, nothing like an adequate supply has ever been furnished those most needy and deserving members of the Methodist community. Most assuredly the widows and orphans, and those preachers who have worn themselves out in the service of the Church, ought not to be "neglected in the daily ministrations."

The conference closed its labors on the 22d day of May, 1812, and sent out the following address as expressive of their feelings and views at this important period of our history:—

"*The Address of the General Conference to the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.*

"DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN:—When we retrospect the divine goodness toward us as a people, our hearts are animated with sentiments of praise and thanksgiving. We have been favored with repeated manifestations of the power and grace of God. The Redeemer has planted his

standard in the midst of us, and given astonishing success to our labors, and annually made accessions of thousands to our number. From the cold provinces of Canada to the sultry regions of Georgia—from the shores of the Atlantic to the waters of the Mississippi—in populous cities, improved countries, and dreary deserts, God has extended the triumphs of his grace. Infidelity trembles in the presence of the cross, superstition yields to the mild influence of the gospel, and ignorance vanishes before the auspicious beams of truth. In the revolution of a few years our number has almost amounted to two hundred thousand, exclusive of expulsions, withdrawings, and the many happy souls who have departed in the faith and gone to their reward in heaven. We have mutually participated in our prosperity.

"The blessings you have received from God should humble you to the dust. A recollection of his mercies should inspire you with gratitude and love. All the divine benedictions conferred upon you have been unmerited and free. Undeserved blessings have been strewed in your paths, and distinguished compassion manifested in all your ways. Whilst myriads of your fellow-creatures grope in pagan darkness and Mohammedan delusion, you enjoy the light and truth of the gospel of Christ. In the midst of civil and ecclesiastical convulsions, you have enjoyed repose and tranquillity. You are therefore under peculiar obligations to grace. 'By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.' To him, therefore, ascribe the glory of your past and present prosperity.

"Frequently in our solemn assemblies we have witnessed the effusions of grace, and joyfully experienced the overwhelming showers of redeeming love. We are bound to you by ties, which death itself cannot dissolve. With you again we renew our covenant, to live and die

your servants in Jesus Christ. You will, therefore, we hope, receive from us the word of exhortation.

"The pursuit of *internal* religion in all its branches, we most ardently insist on. The religion of the Bible does not consist in rites and ceremonies; in subscribing creeds and becoming violent partisans; in the reveries of a heated imagination, nor the paroxysms of agitated passions; but in the mind which was in Jesus Christ; in a victory over sin, and a conformity to the will of God; 'in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance;' in all the amiable virtues which centre in the moral character of God. Without this holiness, we shall never enter into the kingdom of glory. 'Be ye holy, for I am holy,' said the almighty God. And no unclean thing shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, said Jesus Christ. Therefore pursue this holiness with all the ardor of faith and hope. Never give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, until you awake with the lovely likeness of Christ.

"Whilst we insist on *internal*, we do not forget *external* religion. You are commanded to 'let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven;' to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, and to be careful to maintain good works. The duties which God has enjoined on us should be discharged with inviolate fidelity. The eyes of God are upon us; the enemies of religion behold us, and our conscience will accuse or excuse us. O let us be holy in all our outgoings and incomings.

"'Search the Scriptures,' said Jesus Christ, 'for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.' God has not left us to learn his nature and will merely from his works and providence; he has revealed himself in the pages of inspiration, with all the perspicuity necessary to make us wise unto salvation. This

holy revelation should be studied with industry, attention, and candor. We beseech you, read it in your families and in your closets. A proper knowledge of it will render you happy in all the calamities of life, support you in the pangs of death, and prepare you for an endless enjoyment of heaven.

"A strict attention to the Christian ordinances we deem indispensably necessary. Christ himself instituted the holy ordinances of baptism and the sacrament of his supper. We trust his professed followers will never neglect them. They should be precious in our memory, and dear to our heart. 'Go ye,' said Jesus Christ, 'and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' And in reference to his supper he said, 'This do in remembrance of me.'

"The sabbath of the Lord deserves your serious consideration and attention. It should be *wholly* consecrated to his service. All labor, vain conversation, worldly-mindedness, and visiting, should be carefully avoided. Prayer, praise, searching the Scriptures, meditation, and waiting on God, should be our only employment. 'Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy,' is the language of God.

"It is with regret that we have seen the use of ardent spirits, dram-drinking, &c., so common among the Methodists. We have endeavored to suppress the practice by our example, but it is necessary that we add precept to example; and we really think it not consistent with the character of a Christian, to be immersed in the practice of distilling or retailing an article so destructive to the morals of society, and we do most earnestly recommend the annual conferences and our people to join with us in making a firm and constant stand against an evil which has ruined thousands, both in time and eternity.

"'Be not conformed to this world,' said the Apostle St. Paul; 'but be ye transformed by the renewing of your

mind.' We should unanimously arise, and oppose the fashions and maxims of this ungodly world; particularly in the article of *dress*. We are creatures of a moment, hastening to the grave, and soon shall stand before God in judgment; therefore let us not copy the fashions of the gay and thoughtless, especially by putting on gold, and costly apparel; but dress with simplicity, gravity, and neatness.

"The important duty of *fasting* has almost become obsolete. This we are afraid will be productive of melancholy effects. We yet have abundant cause for deep humiliation before God and one another. Our country is threatened, calamities stare us in the face, iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. O let us again resort to fasting and humiliation.

"The propriety of religiously educating your children, we wish seriously to impress upon your minds. To instruct them in the arts and sciences may be useful, but to teach the knowledge of God and their own hearts is absolutely necessary. It is only religion which can render them useful in society, happy in life, and triumphant in death. The effects of indifference to the education of children, must be seen and lamented by every friend to religion. Children who grow up in iniquity become obdurate in sin, and prepared for almost every species of vileness. They transgress the laws of God, violate the principles of humanity, and frequently terminate their unhappy career covered with iniquity and disgrace. Instruct your children, therefore, in the principle and excellence of religion. Whilst young, take them by the hand and lead them into the salutary paths of wisdom and virtue. And rest assured, your labor shall not be in vain. For, said Solomon, 'train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'

"Now, unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly

above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

The Presiding Elder Question—Council for stationing the Preachers.

As this question was largely discussed at the above conference, as well as before and since, and has, at times, occasioned considerable uneasiness in some minds, this seems as suitable a place as any to redeem my pledge to present the question fully and fairly before the reader.

That it may be rightly understood, it is necessary to advert to the circumstances under which the practice of fixing the stations of the preachers originated. When Mr. Wesley commenced his evangelical labors, and helpers were raised up to him from among his sons in the gospel, he was naturally led to appoint them to their particular fields of labor, and to change them as often as he judged it expedient; and thus, from usage introduced in this way, it became an established law, so long as Mr. Wesley lived, to appoint each preacher to his circuit, to change him as often as he might think the state of the work required; and I believe he never allowed any preacher to remain longer than two, or at most three years in one place. But after Mr. Wesley's death, this power devolved upon the conference, who appoint a stationing committee every year, whose duty it is to fix the stations of the preachers, subject to an appeal to the conference, if any one thinks himself aggrieved.

As this power was lodged in the hands of Mr. Wesley, and as his assistant in America acted as his

representative, doing that which he would have done if present; this assistant was in the habit of stationing the preachers, of removing or changing them as often and to whatever place it was judged the state of the work and the talents of the preachers might render it expedient. According to this usage, which had grown up with the growth of the societies in America, at the General Conference in 1784, when the societies were organized into a church, it was made the duty of the bishop "to fix the appointments of the preachers for the several circuits; and in the intervals of the conference to change, receive, or suspend preachers, as necessity may require."*

In the account given of the secession of O'Kelly and its causes, we have seen that he moved for an appeal to the conference from the appointment of the bishop, with the privilege, if any preacher thought himself injured by his appointment, to state his objections, and if they were considered by the conference valid, the bishop should appoint him to another circuit. This motion was, as heretofore related, after a full discussion of its merits, decided in the negative by a very large majority.†

This decision put the question so completely at rest, that we find nothing more in relation to it until the General Conference of 1800, when Dr. Coke, after it had been determined to elect an additional bishop, presented the following resolution for the consideration of the conference:—

"That the new bishop, whenever he presides in an annual conference, in the absence of Bishop Asbury, shall

* See Vol. i, p. 176. † Ibid. p. 344.

bring the stations of the preachers into the conference, and read" (them,) "that he may hear what the conference has to say upon each station."

This motion was withdrawn by the mover; and another, that the "new bishop, in stationing the preachers, be aided by a committee of not less than three, nor more than four preachers, to be chosen by the conference," was, after an exchange of opinions in reference to it, rejected by the conference; as well as several other attempts which were made by different members to restrict the power of the new bishop.

From these movements it would appear that even those who were in favor of abridging the prerogative of the episcopacy in the work of stationing the preachers, were so fully convinced of the wisdom and strict integrity of Bishop Asbury, that they had no desire to curtail his conceded rights in this respect—a conviction highly creditable to him as the superintendent of the Church—and the majority determined that the new bishop should go into office clothed with the same powers which had been ceded to the senior bishop.

I find nothing more on the records of the General Conference in reference to this question until 1808, when a motion was made to make the office of presiding elder elective by the votes of the annual conferences. This motion was largely, and by many of the speakers very ably and eloquently discussed, but was finally decided in the negative by a majority of twenty-one, fifty-two voting in favor and seventy-three against it.

As this motion was, at the special request of the mover, disposed of before the resolutions providing

for a delegated general conference were passed, it has been strongly urged by some that it should be considered unconstitutional either to elect the presiding elders or to associate a committee with the bishops in stationing the preachers; while others contend that as there is nothing in the restrictive regulations bearing specifically on these points, it is still left optional with the conference to modify or change the manner of appointing those officers as may be judged expedient, and also to elect a committee to assist the bishop in stationing the preachers.

Whether this be so or not, the subject was agitated from one General Conference to another, until the year 1828, since which time it has been allowed to sleep in peace. At the conference of 1812 the same question was introduced by a motion from a member of the New-York conference, and fully discussed, but was lost by a majority of three, forty-two voting in favor and forty-five against it. It may be proper to observe here that the delegates in the Philadelphia, New-York, and Genesee conferences were all in favor of this measure, the majority in each being for it, and accordingly sent delegates who coincided with them in opinion; but they were seconded by a few only from the southern and western delegates.

The same fate attended a similar motion in 1816, although one of the bishops elected at that conference was known to be favorable to the proposed change in the mode of selecting the presiding elders. The resolution of this conference was, as finally acted on, in the following words:—

"The bishop, at an early period of the annual conference, shall nominate an elder for each district, and the

conference shall, without debate, either confirm or reject such nomination. If the person or persons so nominated be not elected by the conference, the bishop shall nominate two others for each vacant district, one of whom shall be chosen. And the presiding elder so elected and appointed shall remain in office four years, unless dismissed by the mutual consent of the bishop and conference; but no presiding elder shall be removed from office during the term of four years, unless the reasons for such removal be stated to him in presence of the conference, which shall decide without debate on his case."

It was then provided, in another paragraph, that the presiding elders thus selected, should form a council to assist the bishop in stationing the preachers.

Perhaps a greater amount of talent was never brought to bear on any question ever brought before the General Conference, than was elicited from both sides of the house in the discussion of this resolution. Some of the speeches were deep, pungent, and highly argumentative, the speakers throwing their whole souls into the subject, and winding themselves up to the highest pitch of impassioned eloquence, often concluding with a tremendous appeal to the understandings and consciences of their antagonists, both sides invoking the future prosperity of the Church as an auxiliary to their arguments. The vote ultimately declared the voice of the conference to be against the measure, thirty-eight voting in favor and sixty-three against it.

The same question was brought forward in the General Conference of 1820, and after debate had thereon was again decided in the negative. As however, considerable uneasiness was manifested,

particularly by the advocates of the measure, it was moved by Nathan Bangs, and seconded by William Capers, the former friendly and the latter adverse to the measure,

"That three of the members who desire an election of the presiding elders, and an equal number of those who are opposed to any change of our present plan, be a committee to confer with the bishops upon that subject, and that they report to us whether any, and if any, what alterations might be made to conciliate the wishes of the brethren upon this subject, and that they report to-morrow."

This resolution having passed the conference, the following were appointed members of the committee:—Ezekiel Cooper, Stephen G. Roszel, Nathan Bangs, Joshua Wells, John Emory, William Capers.

After a conference with the bishops, agreeably to their instructions, the committee unanimously concurred in the following report:—

"The committee appointed to confer with the bishops on a plan to conciliate the wishes of the brethren on the subject of choosing presiding elders, recommend to the conference the adoption of the following resolutions, to be inserted in their proper place in the Discipline, namely:—

"1. That whenever in any annual conference there shall be a vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder, in consequence of his period of service of four years having expired, or the bishop wishing to remove any presiding elder, or by death, resignation or otherwise, the bishop or president of the conference having ascertained the number wanted from any of these causes, shall nominate three times the number, out of which the conference shall elect by ballot, without debate, the number wanted;—provided, when there is more than one wanted, not more

than three at a time shall be nominated, nor more than one at a time elected;—Provided also, that in case of any vacancy or vacancies in the office of presiding elder in the interval of any annual conference, the bishop shall have authority to fill the said vacancy or vacancies, until the ensuing annual conference.

"2. That the presiding elders be and hereby are made the advisory council of the bishop or president of the conference in stationing the preachers."

This report was signed by all the members of the committee above named, and submitted to the conference in the afternoon session of May 20th, and, after some little conversation in respect to its merits, was passed by a majority of thirty-six votes, sixty-one in favor and twenty-five against it. As this was presented and adopted in the spirit of compromise, it was hoped by many on both sides of the house, that this long agitated question would be allowed to rest in quiet.

In this expectation they were, however, disappointed; for the Rev. Joshua Soule, who had been elected on the 13th to the episcopal office, after a prayerful and mature consideration of the subject, signified to the conference that if consecrated a bishop, inasmuch as these resolutions were adopted after his election, and were, in his judgment, unconstitutional, he could not consistently with his views of duty, be controlled by them: and Bishop M'Kendree, whose health would not permit him to participate much in the doings of the conference, on the 23d, three days after their passage, came into the conference, and, after assigning sundry reasons, entered his objections against them as unconstitutional, and, as he apprehend-

ed, subversive of the grand system of an efficient and general superintendency and itinerancy.

The judgment of these two men, both justly respected,—the one on account of his office, long and laborious services, his age and experience, the other for having the confidence of a majority of his brethren for one of the superintendents of the Church,—had great influence upon the minds of many, and led to a serious suspense in respect to the expediency of the measure.

These movements, indeed, created quite a sensation in the minds of those who were the most deeply interested in the stability and prosperity of our institutions on both sides of the question, and the more so, as the bishop elect had tendered his resignation, which was finally accepted by the conference. Hence, after an ineffectual attempt to get the above resolutions reconsidered, a motion was at length made and carried, that they be suspended for four years, and that in the mean time the government should be administered as heretofore.

In 1824, their suspension was continued, and at the General Conference in Pittsburgh, in 1828, they were called up, and with but a feeble opposition were rescinded, and the subject has not been since agitated.

I have thus endeavored to furnish the reader with a true and impartial narration of the facts in relation to a question which has caused more agitation in our Church, and sometimes seemed to threaten more disastrous consequences, than any other which, up to that time, had been canvassed on the floor of the General Conference. It only remains now, that the prominence and importance given to it may be duly appreciated, to state the outlines of the arguments which

were used for and against the proposed alteration, by those who entered most deeply into the discussion

Those in favor of the change, alleged,

1. That it is more in conformity to the genius of the American people to have a voice in the election of those who are to rule over them ; and as the presiding elders were, by the usages of the Church, entrusted with a controlling influence over the preachers, they ought to have a choice in their selection.

2. It was contended that so long as they were appointed by the bishop, it necessarily augmented the power of the episcopacy, as, by virtue of this appointment, the presiding elders were amenable to the bishop alone for their official conduct, and not to their brethren in the conference.

3. Hence, the preacher, let him be oppressed ever so much in his appointment, has no medium of redress within his reach, as his case is represented to the appointing power through an ecclesiastical officer over whom he has no control, and who is completely in the bishop's confidence and at his disposal.

4. These things, it was contended, were incompatible with the natural and civil rights of freemen, and especially with that equality among brethren of the same ministerial order, as are the presiding elders and all the other elders in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

5. As to a council to advise with the bishops in stationing the preachers, it was pleaded that however wise and good the bishop might be, it was impossible for him to have that knowledge of the local state of the people and peculiar circumstances of the preachers, which is essential to enable him to make

the most judicious appointments; and hence he assumed a responsibility for which he could not rationally account.

6. And then to give one man the complete control over five hundred others, many of whom may be equal to him in age and experience, and perhaps also in wisdom, learning, and goodness, and as likely to be as disinterested in their views and feelings, was an anomaly in legislation and an absurdity in practice for which no arguments could be adduced, derived from either Scripture or the fitness of things.

7. That however safely this prerogative might be exercised by Bishop Asbury, especially in the infancy of the Church, when the number of preachers was few, it had now become impossible, on the increase of preachers and people, for a bishop to exercise such a tremendous power intelligibly and safely to all concerned. Bishop Asbury, it was argued, was the *father* of the connection, and felt for the entire family in a way that no one else could, and therefore no one else ought to be entrusted with the same power which he had exercised.

8. The example of our British brethren was cited, who, after the death of Mr. Wesley, had given the power of stationing the preachers to a committee, and then they were allowed an appeal to the conference.

To these arguments, it was answered,

1. That the Church of Christ was founded, in some respects, upon very different principles from those on which civil governments rested, and therefore, though analogous in some particulars, yet in others the contrast was so obvious as to neutralize all analogical arguments. That though the people

elected their legislators, president, and governors, yet most of the executive officers were appointed by the president; and as presiding elders were executive officers, their appointment by the bishop might be justified even from analogy.

2. Though it was admitted that they strengthened the hands of the episcopacy, yet being appointed by him, saved the Church from an evil more to be dreaded than mere episcopal power, and that was an electioneering spirit, which must keep the conferences in perpetual agitations—engendering a strife incompatible with the spirit of harmony and brotherly love.

3. Hence, though a preacher might, either from inadvertence or design, be injured in his appointment, yet to make the presiding elder dependant on the choice of an annual conference might make him fear to do his duty, in respect to enforcing discipline, and in exacting vigilance from those under him in the discharge of duty; moreover his redress was always with the bishop and the annual conference, to whom conjointly the presiding elder is responsible for his official conduct.

4. As to natural and civil rights, it was retorted, that though a Methodist preacher retained them as a citizen, yet the moment he entered the itinerancy, he became subject to ecclesiastical restraints which, though not incompatible with his rights as a freeman, were nevertheless essential to the preservation and efficient operation of the itinerancy.

5. In respect to the necessity, arising from the limited information and want of local knowledge of a bishop, of associating others with him in stationing the preachers, this was remedied in practice by his

receiving all the information he could from presiding elders and others, and then acting according to the dictates of an unbiased judgment, which was less likely to be influenced by local prejudices than those who, from their more limited *sphere* of information, were liable to be biased by partial interests and local feelings.

6. As to an unlimited control over five hundred men, more or less, while it was admitted that many of them might be equal to the bishop in general wisdom and experience, yet they could not, from their position, have that comprehensive knowledge of the *whole* work, and that experience arising from extensive travel and information which belonged to an itinerating episcopacy; and, moreover, this control had a check in annual conferences, who might ultimately determine whether a preacher was justified or not in refusing to go to his appointment, and also by the General Conference, under the inspection of which the bishop's conduct passed every fourth year.

7. Though it be admitted that Bishop Asbury sustained a fatherly relation to the Church which none of his successors could, and had a more intimate knowledge of preachers and people, both from his having grown up with them, and the comparative smallness of their number, yet it was contended, that the having an increased number of bishops, together with those restraints constantly thrown around them by the watchful vigilance of their brethren in the annual and general conferences, would prevent a wanton exercise of power, and render it still safe in their hands.

8. As to our British brethren, they had no other visible head than their conference. But we have,

and therefore can act more efficiently through this medium, than we could do by a stationing committee. It was still further contended, and with great force of argument, that if this power were taken from the bishops, it would be extremely difficult to keep up an interchange of preachers from one annual conference to another, a difficulty not felt in England, where they were all united in one conference, in which all their business was transacted.

In the course of this discussion two opposite views were taken of the doctrine of responsibility. Some of those who contended for reserving this power in the hands of the bishop, insisted that the episcopacy was responsible for the entire executive administration, in all its ramifications, and therefore, in order that it might exercise it safely, it must have the control of the appointments, not indeed to office, but to the several stations, so that if those acting under its appointment did not discharge their trusts with fidelity, they might be removed or changed at pleasure; and as a strong and commanding motive for a wise and faithful execution of this high trust, the episcopacy was held responsible to the General Conference, which had entrusted to the bishops the preservation of our itinerancy in all its parts; and this they could not do if the power of appointment were taken from them.

To this it was replied, that though this seemed very plausible in theory, it was not possible to exemplify it in practice—that it was loading the episcopacy with a weight of responsibility too heavy for any mortal and fallible man to bear, and therefore must ultimately crush the episcopacy beneath its

pressure. To prevent this it would be most judicious to divide the responsibility among the several annual conferences, and hold the presiding elders especially strictly responsible to them for their official as well as their moral and Christian conduct—as it was admitted on all hands that the preachers were held accountable to their respective conferences for their ministerial and Christian conduct, it was in vain to contend that the episcopacy should be made liable to censure for their malversation. The former traced responsibility from the General Conference, who made the regulations and judged of episcopal acts, to the episcopacy, and thence down through the several grades of Church officers: the latter traced it up through the societies, to quarterly and annual conferences, to the General Conference; while others contended, with more truth than either, it is believed, that each body and officer was accountable for its and his own conduct, and the latter to the tribunal from which he received his authority, and held the right to call him to an account for his acts and deeds.

These several topics, with others of a collateral character, were enlarged upon and amplified at the several stages of this discussion, according to the peculiar views and feelings of the several speakers who distinguished themselves on each side of the question, until the subject seemed to be exhausted; when finally, other matters of weightier importance and more seriously affecting the vital principles of Methodism, called off the attention of all from this question, and led them to a union of effort to preserve our institutions from deterioration; and this union served

to convince both that if they had at any time indulged suspicions of each other's attachment to the essential principles of our economy, they had labored under erroneous impressions.

That such suspicions were indulged to some extent, there is reason to believe; and it was this which sometimes gave an irritating poignancy to some of the remarks and arguments, and led to momentary interruptions of brotherly affection. But I think I may now venture to say without the fear of contradiction, that among those who advocated this modification in a feature of our government, there have been found those who have manifested an unabated attachment to the episcopacy, to the itinerancy, and the entire economy of our Church, and have done as much effectually to support it as any of their brethren; and I am equally well convinced that those who withstood all such alterations were actuated by the same hallowed motives, and that it was an honest fear that if admitted, they would impair the integrity and weaken the force and energy of the general system, and thus impede its progress in its career of usefulness; but now, having for the present buried all differences of opinion, both may rejoice together in working unitedly in carrying forward the grand cause in which we are mutually engaged, and in striving to hand down the Methodism, which we all love, unimpaired to the generations that may come after us.

It will be perceived by the attentive reader, that it was admitted on all hands that a power to station the ministry must exist somewhere, or the itinerancy would stop. For the moment it is admitted that a minister may choose his own station, or that the people may

control it, the itinerancy falls to pieces. The only controversy therefore was, where can the stationing power be the most usefully, safely, and energetically lodged, and the majority have hitherto decided with the bishops—and there let it rest, unless future events shall reveal such an abuse of the power as will render it necessary either to dissolve the itinerancy or to commit its destinies to other hands—neither of which, it is hoped, will ever be realized.

I know it has been contended by some that the people are hereby deprived of all their rights in the choice of their minister. This, however, is, I think, a great mistake. They choose and recommend them all, in the first instance, in their primary assemblies; for no man can receive a license, either to exhort or preach, unless he be first recommended by the class or leaders' meeting to which he belongs. He then passes up through the quarterly-meeting conference, composed of his peers, and thence to the annual conference, in the meantime exercising his gifts among the brethren who are the ultimate judges of his qualifications and usefulness.

In the next place the people have access to the stationing power, and are respectfully heard; for Bishop Asbury used to say, we must never deny our people the right of being heard by petition or remonstrance; as this is all the choice they either have or demand in respect to whom they will have to rule over and to preach to them; and therefore were this denied them, they might well complain of a spiritual despotism. Except the Congregationalists—and I do not know that we ought to except † even these—the

† That the reader may perceive the reason why it is doubt-

Methodists have as much of a voice in the choice of their ministers, as any other denomination; for the Presbyterians can neither settle nor dismiss a minister without the consent of the presbytery, nor the

ed whether or no any exception should be made, let him recollect that the Congregationalists claim to exercise the right of choosing their own ministers, and of dismissing them at pleasure. Now let us suppose in a certain district of country there are one hundred congregations and as many ministers to supply them; that among these one hundred ministers there are say twenty of eminent talents, thirty of middling, and the other fifty ranking among those of the more ordinary class. It may be supposed that each of the one hundred congregations will choose one of the twenty, but eighty of them *must* be disappointed; and then, allowing them to make choice of the other thirty, fifty of these *must* yet be disappointed, and must, therefore, either do without any, or take the man they do not want; for these congregations can no more be certain of the man of their choice, than they would if the ultimate decision were left with a third person.

Even in this respect, therefore, they are no more likely to be gratified in their choice than a Methodist congregation. In another respect the Methodists have greatly the advantage, both ministers and people. If the Methodist people get a minister who does not suit them, they *may*, by remonstrance to the appointing power, rid themselves of him at the end of one year, or at the end of two years he *must* be removed to another place. Not so with the Congregationalists, nor any of the other denominations we have mentioned. Some settle for life, and some for a term of years. In such cases they must, however disagreeable he may be, either keep him to the end of the term, or hire him to depart. Or if he be engaged from year to year, what fluctuations in uncertainty may agitate both minister and people; and if the former be dismissed, the latter are not sure of a better, while the minister himself is thrown out upon the world pennyless, until he can ingratiate himself into the favor of some other people less particular than those he left, in respect to ministerial qualifications.

Now these evils are, in a great measure at least, remedied

Protestant Episcopalians, or other Episcopal Churches, without the consent of their bishop. There must, in the nature of things, be an umpire somewhere, to decide this question; and the Methodist Episcopal Church has seen fit, for the reasons already assigned, to commit it to the episcopacy; and if it require a greater sacrifice on the part of the ministry to bow to its exercise than some others are willing to make, it must be admitted, I think, on all hands, that it is a mode of procedure which has so far worked energetically and most beneficially for the best interests of the people generally; for all classes have more or less either seen or felt its benign effects in bringing sinners from darkness to light, and preserving the Church in peace and purity.

CHAPTER II.

From the close of the General Conference of 1812 to the death of Bishop Asbury, in 1816.

Soon after the adjournment of the conference, namely, on the 18th of June, the United States declared war against Great Britain. Though this event had been expected for some time, yet it created a great sensation throughout the country, and particularly among those who regarded religion as breathing nought but peace and good will to man. The note of preparation, however, was soon sounded through all

by the system adopted by the Methodist plan of stationing the preachers. It has another immense advantage over the other—it diffuses ministerial gifts, by a yearly or biennial interchange, over the whole surface of the Church; and thus, "if one suffer all suffer with it," and all are equally partakers of the gifts and graces of the entire ministry.

our borders; and as it was expected that the war would rage principally along our western and north-western frontiers, where the inhabitants of the United States and of the Canadas approximated each other, it was foreseen that the Methodists in these two countries must necessarily come into unhappy collisions with each other, and perhaps be obliged, however reluctantly, to spill each other's blood.*

Only one preacher, therefore, Thomas Burch, who volunteered for Canada from the United States, arrived there; the other, Nathan Bangs, who was appointed presiding elder in the lower province, but was to have charge also of Montreal, by the consent of the bishops, relinquished his journey, after removing from New-York as far as Lansingburgh, and remained in the United States.

In consequence of this state of things the brethren in Upper Canada were prevented from attending the Genesee conference, to which they were now attached; and as all friendly intercourse between the two countries was suspended, they were necessarily left to take care of themselves in the best way they could. This laid the foundation of that uneasiness in the Canadas which eventuated in the separation of the work in those provinces from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and led to their connection finally with the Wesleyan Methodist Conference.†

The great success which accompanied the labors of the Methodist itinerants in the western states and

* See note A at the end of the volume.

† This event, with the causes which led to it, belongs to another period of our history, and will be noticed in its proper place.

territories, and the growing importance in a national point of view, of those parts of the federal union, began to attract the attention and to call forth the energies of other denominations. Hitherto these had, on many occasions, affected to treat the Methodists with silent contempt, as unworthy of notice. But their growing prosperity in almost every direction, seemed at length to awaken others to activity in striving to imitate them in their zealous efforts to extend the gospel by means of missionary labors in the new countries and elsewhere.

In 1810 the American Board of Commissioners commenced its operations, and not long after, with a view to furnish them with suitable agents, who might be willing to endure the fatigues and privations incident to a missionary life in the new countries, "The Charitable Society for the Education of Pious Young Men for the Ministry of the Gospel" was instituted. And in order to ascertain the true state of things in the western country, a commission was sent about this time on an exploring expedition through the new states and territories, and *Schermerhorn* and *Mills* were intrusted with its execution. The report of their travels was published; and as they animadverted quite freely upon the economy of the Methodist Church, upon the conduct of its ministers, and general plan of operations, it roused the indignation of many, and more especially of those who had spent their life and sacrificed their all of mere earthly enjoyments to plant the standard of the cross in those new countries.

One thing seemed to astonish these gentlemen very much, and shows their want of information in regard to the economy of our Church, and that was in al-

most every settlement they visited they found not only Methodists and Methodist preachers, but also Methodist *books*, and the query was, whence they came—when, lo and behold! they were informed that these were sold, and the proceeds forwarded to New-York to furnish means to print and circulate more! And thus the imagination of those gentlemen and their honest readers was filled with the alarming apprehension that the country was in danger of being flooded with Methodist publications.

Another danger to be apprehended was the pernicious consequences resulting to the population of the west from the prevalence of Methodist doctrine and usages; and, in order to give effect to the note of alarm, and the danger to be apprehended from the rapid increase of the societies, they told their readers that persons were received into the Church with only the "expression of desire," thus mutilating the language of the "General Rules of the United Societies," for the purpose, as it would seem, of lowering the character of Methodism in the public estimation; for the readers of this report would not know whether the condition of membership was a "desire" for riches, for honor, or a desire merely to become Methodists—whereas the "rules" specify the character of the desire, and likewise state the evidence of its real existence—"a desire to flee the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins," affirming that evidence of such a desire is manifested "by avoiding evil of every kind, and doing good of every possible sort, according to their power and opportunity."

Those who read this pamphlet, and who were acquainted with the state of things in the west, were

somewhat surprised that while the people there were growing up into settlements, towns, and villages, destitute of the ordinances of religion, those who sustained the present commission manifested no concern at all for their spiritual welfare; but that now, since the towns were built, the "wilderness turned into a fruitful field," and Methodist circuits, societies, districts, and even annual conferences established there, they should all at once awake as from a profound sleep, and casting a hasty glance over the land, should discover that the people were going fast to destruction, and that Methodism was poisoning the fountains of knowledge and religion with its pestiferous breath!

These things are mentioned because they form, in some respects, a new era in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, particularly in the west, and led to a new sort of warfare which we have been called upon to sustain in order to rescue our institutions from reproach, and to preserve our plans of procedure from being frustrated by new modes of attack. The sequel of our history will develope all these things, and place them in a true point of light.

Bishop Asbury, though he continued his annual tour of the continent, and attended the conferences in company with his colleague, Bishop M'Kendree, began to totter under the infirmities of age, and frequent attacks of disease. He was in New-England when the proclamation of the president of the United States announced to the people that war was declared against Great Britain. He who had passed unscathed through a bloody contest of seven years' duration, suffering numerous hardships in striving to preserve a pure conscience while propagating a religion of peace and

good-will, could not behold the approach of another struggle of a similar character, without feelings of anxiety and alarm. These he expressed in a very emphatic manner to the writer of these pages, remarking, in reference to our intercourse with our Canadian brethren, "there is no mercy in war, and hence we must expect much suffering on our frontier settlements," and concluded by saying, that "doubtless our sins as a nation had provoked the divine indignation against us, and therefore we must expect to suffer."

He, however, kept on his way, exclaiming with pious resignation, "I live in God from moment to moment." Beholding the demoralizing tendency of strong drink, in a certain neighbourhood, he observes, "They are decent in their behaviour, and would be more so, were it not for vile whiskey. This is the prime curse of the United States, and will be, I fear much, the ruin of all that is excellent in morals and government in them. Lord, interpose thine arm!" How would his soul have expanded with gratitude and delight to have beheld the temperance reformation which began its salutary operations since his day! And would he not have deprecated any effort to weaken its force, especially by those who claim to be his sons in the gospel?

After traversing various parts of the country, often trembling under the infirmities of a sickly body, crossing the Alleghany mountains, and descending into the valley of the Ohio, attending several camp-meetings in his route, he says, "I shall have traveled six thousand miles in eight months, met in nine conferences, and have been present in ten camp-meetings." But then he adds soon after, in reference to his labors and

physical sufferings, for such was his debility that his friends sometimes had to lift him into his carriage, "O let us not complain, when we think of the suffering, wounded, and dying of the hostile armies! If we suffer, what shall comfort us? Let us see—Ohio will give us six thousand for her increase of members in one new district." This indeed was his reward; all he asked or sought of his labors and sufferings. And it shows also, that notwithstanding hostile armies were already measuring swords, the God of Israel was still at work for the salvation of the people.

It appears, indeed, that in the midst of the agitations occasioned by the war which began to rage on the frontier, and in some places upon the sea-board, God wrought in a powerful manner in various parts of the country, particularly on the James River district, where not less than six hundred were brought into the Church, chiefly through the agency of camp-meetings. In the New-London district also there was a gracious work of God, including some towns in Rhode Island, in which upward of one hundred souls were brought into gospel fellowship, some of whom connected themselves with other denominations.

Forty-eight were located this year, ten returned supernumerary, eighteen superannuated, one was expelled, and six had died. These last were *Samuel Mills*, *Nathan Weedon*, *Jesse Pinnell*, *Lansford Whiting*, *Samuel Thomas*, and *Greenleaf N. Norris*. Some of these had labored long and faithfully, and they all died witnessing a good confession, and are, no doubt, gathered to their fathers in a better world.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	156,852	38,505	195,357	678
Last year	148,835	35,732	184,567	668
Increase	8,017	2,773	10,790	10

1813. There were nine annual conferences this year, the Mississippi Conference which was authorized to be formed, if the bishops saw it needful, not having been established.

The times were distressing along the lines between the United States and the Canadas, as those places were the principal scenes of the war which was now raging with increasing violence between the two countries. This not only broke off all friendly intercourse with each other, but kept the inhabitants in a continual state of alarm and irritation, quite unfriendly to the progress of pure religion. But notwithstanding this state of things, there were very extensive revivals of religion in other places, so that the increase of members was considerably more than it had been for several years previously, as may be seen below. Probably many were led to pray more fervently and to labor more faithfully in consequence of the afflictions which were felt in the country, while others were induced to think more seriously on their latter end.

Among those who located in the New-England Conference this year, was *Pliny Brett*, whose admission into the conference had been deferred for one year at the time he was eligible to be received into full connection. Soon after his location he withdrew from the Church, put himself at the head of a party

under the denomination of "Reformed Methodists." He lured from the Church several local preachers, and a considerable number of members, almost entirely breaking up some small societies, and thereby occasioned much uneasiness where he commenced his operations, which was in Cape Cod, in Massachusetts. From thence his influence extended into Vermont, where he was seconded in his endeavors to draw away disciples after him by a local preacher by the name of *Baily*. They succeeded in raising a considerable party, which, for a short season, made some inroads upon our Church; and though Mr. Baily succeeded in establishing some congregations, and still lives to enjoy the fruit of his labors, yet the influence of the party is very limited, and furnishes another evidence that it requires a union of deep piety and much talent to found a distinct denomination of sufficient magnitude to command public confidence, and to exert an extensive influence on the community.

While these things were testing the faith and patience of some, and "garments rolled in blood" were frightening others with fearful apprehensions for the stability of our political institutions, the faithful servants of God, keeping aloof as much as possible from the strife of party and the war of words, steadily pursued their way in search of "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It is due to truth, however, to remark, that while ministers of the gospel, biased perhaps too much by some influential members of their congregations, refused even to pray for their rulers and country,* Bishop Asbury, who had long since

* It is stated, on good authority, that in the time of the war,

adopted this country as his own, and most cordially loved its institutions, declared most plainly and pointedly, on the floor of an annual conference, that he who refused, at this time especially, to pray for his country, deserved not the name of a Christian or a Christian minister, inasmuch as it was specifically enjoined on all such, not only to honor magistrates, but to "pray for all that are in authority, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty."

It was very manifest to all who saw him, that Bishop Asbury was sinking under the infirmities of a sickly body, weakened from time to time by exposures to inclement seasons, continual labors, and oppressed with a multitude of cares, known only to those who feel the weight of such a responsible station. Nevertheless, although his friends sometimes remonstrated against it, he still performed his annual tour of the continent, shunning no danger, deferring no duty which might be performed to-day, from a fear that he should not have strength for the morrow, but both publicly and privately admonishing all who came in his way of the danger of sin, and encouraging the good to persevere in their work. To aid him in scattering the good seed of the kingdom, he furnished himself with religious tracts, sometimes getting them printed at his own expense—for as yet we had no tract society—Bibles, and Testaments, which he dis-

a number of clergymen in the city of New-York held a meeting for the purpose of deliberating on the propriety of praying for their civil rulers, and they finally came to the grave conclusion that they could not do it conscientiously. This, however, was by no means the case with all, though I believe most of the clergy in the eastern states were very much opposed to the measures of the government.

tributed among the poor; and to assist in extending the work in the poorer settlements, he handed his "mite subscription" to all whom he considered able to give, allowing no individual to subscribe over one dollar, though, if they chose, each member of the family might become a donor.

Apprehensive, as it seems from notices in his journals, that he had not many years to live, he dictated a valedictory address to his colleague, Bishop M'Kendree, on the order and institutions of the primitive Church; and on Friday, October 29th, he says:—"On the peaceful banks of the Saluda I wrote my valedictory address to the presiding elders." In another place he speaks of having made his will, in which he says that, through the benevolence of some kind friends who had died childless, about two thousand dollars had been bequeathed to him, which he should leave to the Book Concern. "Let it return," he remarks, "and continue to aid the cause of piety."

In the labors of the conferences he often speaks in terms of eulogy upon the help afforded him by Bishop M'Kendree, who, if he did not always travel by his side, generally met him at the annual conferences, and discharged most of the active duties of president, and assisted in the ordinations and other services of the sanctuary. He needed not indeed any other stimulant to active exertions than his own burning zeal for God, and the example constantly set him by his senior in office. Mutual affection and respect bound them together, and made them "true yoke-fellows" in the laborious exercise of their joint superintendency. By this means they threw around the general itinerancy, and the entire work, a weight of

influence not easily resisted, but it was felt from the centre to the circumference of the connection.

Thus by the example of their superintendents, whose joint labors produced a most happy effect, the presiding elders upon their districts, the elders, deacons, and preachers upon their several circuits and stations, were stimulated to active diligence, and the members of the Church generally participated in the spirit which actuated their leaders. By this united and harmonious action, as before said, notwithstanding the noise of battle was heard along the frontiers, heightened as it sometimes was by the war-whoop of hostile Indians who were invading some of the defenceless settlements, the Church was generally prosperous, sinners were converted, and saints "built up on their most holy faith."

Yet sixty-three preachers were located! eleven became supernumerary, twenty superannuated, three were expelled, and one, *William B. Lacy*, withdrew, and afterward connected himself with the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Thomas Branch, *John Crane*, *Jacob Rumph*, *Jesse Brown*, *William Young*, *Lasley Matthews*, *John Smith*, *Robert Hebard*, *John Russell*, and *Ebenezer White*, having fulfilled their ministry with fidelity, had taken their departure to another world during the past year.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	171,448	42,859	214,307	700
Last year	156,852	38,505	195,357	716
Increase	14,596	4,354	18,950	De.16*

* The preachers in Canada, owing to the war, are not in-

1814. The more than usual increase during the past year, in the midst of the agitation of war and its attendant evils, shows that religion had a strong hold upon the affections of the people, and that while the clarion of war sounded along our frontiers and echoed over the waters of the lakes, as well as upon the waves of the ocean, men were not unmindful of their duty to God and to one another. Indeed, those who viewed war among the sorest of God's judgments, and whose hearts were panting for the return of peace, were led to humble themselves by fasting and prayer, that the God of peace and love might visit his heritage more plentifully with the showers of his grace. And how much these faithful prayers might have contributed to hasten a termination of the bloody conflict, and to bring about the blessings of peace, who but the Omniscient can tell? If, in answer to the prayer of faith in his Son, "He lets his lifted thunder drop"—if "God's hands or bound or open are, as Moses or Elijah prays"—and if God would spare the devoted "cities of the plain" for the sake of ten righteous persons—may we not believe that he might have inclined the hearts of the rulers of Great Britain and America to pacific measures in answer to the prayers of his people on both sides of the Atlantic? That there were many such we know. That they deprecated this war as unnatural, and as tending to desolate the earth in vain, is equally certain. And hence the united prayers of many went

cluded in this enumeration, which makes the apparent decrease; nor are the members, else the increase would have appeared nearly three thousand more.

up before the throne, that the olive-branch of peace might supplant the bloody flag of war.

But the time was not yet. The war still raged this year with more violence than ever. And perhaps party politics, particularly in the eastern section of our country, never ran higher than they did about this time. Indeed, many feared that a severance of our happy union would result from this feverish excitement. Yet the God of our fathers would not have it so. Just as this storm was ready to burst upon our heads, he who "rides upon the stormy sky, and calms the roaring seas," appeared to hush the contending elements, and to bid the hostile forces cease their bloody strife.

In the mean time, the disastrous effects of these things began to be more sensibly felt on the interests of true religion. Although those who were deeply devoted to God held on their way, and poured out their desires to God for the return of peace and the prosperity of the cause of Christ, yet many, lured by the glare of military glory, or seized with a spirit of revenge for the merciless warfare waged by the hostile Indians on defenceless women and children, or fired with a zeal to vindicate their country's rights against the invasions of their foes, in many instances, having lost the fervor of their piety, entered into the war with renewed ardor. The enemy indeed pushed more closely upon us now on every side. The burning of Washington, the attack upon Baltimore, and the threatening attitude assumed toward the cities of New-York, Boston, and other places, and the invasions on our frontiers, roused a warlike feeling throughout the nation, and excited such a general

spirit of resistance to these aggressions, that for a season the spirit of religion seemed to be absorbed in the feeling of patriotism, and the war-whoop took the place of thanksgiving and prayer to God. Add to this the domestic disputes arising from variant opinions respecting the policy of the war, which pervaded all ranks of society, from the halls of legislation to the circles around the fireside, and we shall see reasons enough why religion did not prosper in the hearts of the people as it had done heretofore.

In the midst of these "shakings and tremblings," on the earth, while some were rejoicing over victories won by our fleets upon the ocean and the lakes, or boasting of the prowess exhibited by our armies upon the land, and others affecting to lament the superior skill and bravery of our enemies, there were not wanting those who sighed in secret and in public for "the abominations which make desolate," and who exerted their energies for the "salvation of Israel." These, keeping aloof as much as possible from political strife, were still crying aloud to sinners to "repent and give glory to God," and exhorting His people to steadfastness in the faith. And though they did not always find the "Son of peace" in every house into which they entered, yet the peace of God rested upon them, as the reward of their endeavors to promote "peace on earth and good will to men."

A heavy affliction this year came upon Bishop Asbury, and for some time his life was held in suspense. Though suffering under great bodily weakness, by the kind and unremitting attention of his traveling companion, *John Wesley Bond*, of whom the Bishop speaks in terms of the warmest affection

and approbation, he was enabled to perform his usual tour from one annual conference to another, until he arrived, in the latter part of April, at Bethel, in the state of New-Jersey. Here he was seized with an inflammatory fever, with which he suffered severely, and for some time his valuable life was despaired of by his physicians and friends. Dr. T. F. Sargent, of Philadelphia, attended him as his medical friend, with unremitting attention; and the New-York Conference, then in session in the city, despatched a special messenger, the Rev. Daniel Hitt, to present to him their affectionate respects, and to inquire after his health; they were rejoiced to hear on his return, that the bishop was likely to recover. Referring to this event in his journal, he says:—

"We should have failed in our march through New-Jersey, but we have received great kindness and attentions, and have had great accommodations. I return to my journal after an interval of twelve weeks. I have been ill indeed, but medicine, nursing, and kindness, under God, have been so far effectual, that I have recovered strength enough to sit in my little covered wagon, in which they left me."—"I would not be loved to death, and so came down from my sick room, and took to the road, weak enough. Attentions constant, and kindness unceasing, have pursued me to this place. I look back upon a martyr's life of toil and privation and pain; and I am ready for a martyr's death. The purity of my intentions—my diligence in the labors to which God has been pleased to call me—the unknown sufferings I have endured—what are all these? The merit, atonement, and righteousness of Christ alone make my plea. My friends in Philadelphia gave me a light, four-wheeled carriage; but God and the

Baltimore Conference made me a richer present—they gave me John Wesley Bond as a traveling companion. Has he his equal on earth for excellence of every kind as an aid? I groan one minute with pain, and shout glory the next!"

And where would the reader expect to find this sick, limping, skeleton of a man next? Under the hands of a nurse, beneath the roof of some hospitable mansion, surrounded by kind-hearted and sympathizing friends? He will be disappointed. For although after he so far recovered as to be lifted into his "light, four-wheeled carriage," the gift of his Philadelphia friends, he appeared more like a walking skeleton than a living man; yet on the 23d of July, four days only after penning the above paragrapli, we find him in Pitts burgh, west of the Alleghany mountains, "bending his way," to use his own words, "down the west side of the Ohio to Swickley," where he was detained two days; and thence, in company with his faithful com panion, John Wesley Bond, he urged his way through rough roads, swamps, and dismal causeways, to Steu benville, where he remarks.—"My health is better:"—"I live in patience, in purity, and the perfect love of God." And thus he performed his western tour, sometimes preaching, though unable to preside in the conferences, and finally returned to the Atlantic states, somewhat improved in health, borne up by the conscious smiles of his heavenly Father, the sympathy and affectionate attentions of his numerous friends.

But Bishop Asbury never after recovered his wonted vigor. His countenance was fallen and pale—his limbs trembled, and his whole frame bore marks of decay. Indeed, there was a something in his ap-

pearance which, while it indicated a "soul full of glory and of God," struck the beholder with an awe which may be better felt than described. Not being able to stand while he addressed an assembly, he sat upon a seat prepared for that purpose, and while thus sitting—his whitened locks speaking the honors of age, his pallid countenance testifying his general debility, his head involuntarily dropping forward until the chin apparently rested upon his breast—no sooner did he begin to speak than his deep sonorous voice, uttering words in the name of his God, would arouse the attention of the auditory to such thoughts of eternity as overwhelmed them with breathless awe and silent astonishment. Though I can remember, I cannot describe, his appearance on those occasions. Something, indeed, more than merely human seemed to lighten up his countenance when his subject inspired him with those "thoughts which breathe" and "words which burn;" and he appeared to soar above the infirmities that pressed him down on ordinary occasions; at the same time an unearthly appearance, full of dignity, majesty, and yet softened with the graces of meekness and patience, sat upon his visage and played through the wrinkles of his cheeks.

Yet in the midst of all these weaknesses he journeyed from place to place, saying, "God is with me in all my feebleness"—"My spiritual consolations flow from God in great abundance—my soul rejoices exceedingly in God." Happy he who can thus testify to the goodness of God to him personally, while trembling under the infirmities of age, disease, care, and labor.

Among those who had taken their departure to

another world this year, was the Rev. *Philip W. Otterbein*, the German minister who had assisted in the consecration of Mr. Asbury to the office of a bishop, and with whom he ever after held an intimate, Christian, and ministerial fellowship. Though not formally attached to the Methodists, yet as he always favored their cause, invited them to his pulpit, and reciprocated with them in acts of brotherly love, it seems proper that some notice should be taken of him in this place.

The following, though it includes an account of several others besides Mr. Otterbein, yet as it contains interesting information, and would suffer from an abridgment, is given as I find it in the Methodist Magazine, vol. vi., pp. 210, 249. It was furnished at the special request of Bishop Asbury, some time before his death, by his friend, *F. Hollingsworth*, who transcribed the bishop's journal, and prepared it for the press. It is as follows:—

"Jacob Boehm, the great grandfather of one of the distinguished subjects of the following *notices*, was of a respectable family in Switzerland; and, as is presumed, a member of the German Presbyterian Church. His son Jacob was put to a trade; and after faithfully serving out his time, he, according to the custom of his country, set out upon his three years' travels. In his wanderings through Germany he fell in with the *Pietists;* a people in their faith, discipline, and worship, resembling, in a good degree, the Methodists, but more closely the societies and congregations formed by William Otterbein and Martin Boehm. Upon our traveler's return to the parental roof he talked in a style that neither his father nor the parson could comprehend; they were *natural men*, and under-

stood not the things of God. His evangelical conversation, mingled, most probably, with reproof of the vices and pharisaism of the day, brought, by necessary consequence, persecution upon him; and he was sent, guarded by an elder brother, to prison. He escaped, however, from his confinement, and sought a refuge in Germany, where he remained, having settled near the Rhine. He shortly after attached himself to the Menonists, became an honored elder in that church, and, we trust, died in the Lord. His son Jacob, the third, was also a member in the Menonist church. He gave an example of sobriety, temperance, and industry to his children and neighborhood before and after his emigration to Pennsylvania, in 1716 or '17; and was honored in both countries. As a professor of religion he lived up to the light he had; but it was under the ministry of his better instructed son, Martin Boehm, that he was blest with superior illumination. He died in peace at the family plantation, on Pecaway, Conestoga township, Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, aged eighty-seven years. The son of Jacob Boehm the third, Martin Boehm, of whom we desire to speak more particularly, was born in November, 1725. The labors and experience of his life, as a professor of religion and minister of Christ, may be pretty justly estimated by what we learn from himself, communicated in answers to certain questions propounded to him by his son Jacob, which we here transcribe:—

'*Quest.* Father, when were you put into the ministry?'

'*Ans.* My ministerial labors began about the year 1756. Three years afterward, by nomination of the *lot*, I received full pastoral orders.'

'*Quest.* What had been your religious experience at that time?'

'*Ans.* I was sincere and strict in the religious duties of prayer in my family, in the congregation, and in the closet. I lived and preached according to the light I had.

I was a servant, and not a son; nor did I know any one at that time who could claim the birthright by adoption but Nancy Keagy, my mother's sister; she was a woman of great piety and singular devotion to God.'

'*Quest.* By what means did you discover the nature and necessity of a real change of heart?'

'*Ans.* By deep meditation upon the doctrines which I myself preached of the fall of man, his sinful state, and utter helplessness, I discovered and felt the want of Christ within. About the year 1761, hearing of a great work of God in New-Virginia among the *New-Lights*, as they were called, I resolved to find the truth more fully. I accordingly visited those parts, and saw many gracious souls who could give a rational and Scriptural account of their experience and acceptance with God; these assurances roused me to greater efforts to obtain the blessing. On my return, very large congregations assembled to hear the word, not only on the Sabbaths, but on week-days also. My zeal displeased some of my brethren in the ministry; but my heart was enlarged, and I had an earnest travail of soul to extend the knowledge of salvation to Jew and Gentile. I enlarged the sphere of my labors as much as my situation in life would permit.'

'*Quest.* Were your labors owned of the Lord in the awakening and conversion of souls?'

'*Ans.* Yes: many were brought to the knowledge of the truth. But it was a *strange work;* and some of the Menonist meeting-houses were closed against me. Nevertheless, I was received in other places. I now preached the gospel spiritually and powerfully. Some years afterward I was excommunicated from the Menonist Church on a charge, truly enough advanced, of holding fellowship with other societies of a different language. I had invited the Menonites to my house, and they soon formed the society in the neighborhood which exists to this day: my

beloved wife Eve, my children, and my cousin Keagy's family, were among the first of its members. For myself, I felt my heart more greatly enlarged toward all religious persons and to all denominations of Christians. Upward of thirty years ago I became acquainted with my greatly beloved brother, William Otterbein, and several other ministers, who about this time had been ejected from their churches, as I had been from mine, because of their zeal, which was looked upon as an irregularity. We held many and large meetings in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New-Virginia, which generally lasted three days: at these meetings hundreds were made the subjects of penitence and pardon. Being convinced of the necessity of order and discipline in the church of God, and having no wish to be at the head of a separate body, I advised serious persons to join the Methodists, whose doctrine, discipline, and zeal suited, as I thought, an unlearned, sincere, and simple-hearted people. Several of the ministers with whom I labored, continued to meet in a conference of the German United Brethren; but we felt the difficulties arising from the want of that which the Methodists possessed. Age having overtaken me, with some of its accompanying infirmities, I could not travel as I had formerly done. In 1802 I enrolled my name on a Methodist class-book, and I have found great comfort in meeting with my brethren. I can truly say my last days are my best days. My beloved Eve is traveling with me the same road Zionward; my children, and most of my grand-children, are made the happy partakers of the same grace. I am, this 12th of April, 1811, in my eighty-sixth year. Through the boundless goodness of my God, I am still able to visit the sick, and occasionally, to preach in the neighborhood: to his name be all the glory in Christ Jesus!'

"Martin Boehm died on the 23d of March, 1812. His death was thought to have been hastened by an imprudent

change of dress. Bishop Asbury, in a sermon preached upon the occasion of the death of his long-known and long-loved friend, improved the opportunity by mentioning some further particulars of him, of his friends, and of the work of God in which he and they had labored. His observations are, with the alteration and substitution of a few sentences and words, as follow:—'Martin Boehm had frequent and severe conflicts in his own mind, produced by the necessity he felt himself under of offending his Menonist brethren by the zeal and doctrines of his ministry: some he gained; but most of them opposed him. He had difficulties also with his United Brethren. It was late in life that he joined the Methodists, to whom, long before, his wife and children had attached themselves: the head of the house had two societies to pass through to arrive at the Methodists, and his meek and quiet spirit kept him back. Honest and unsuspecting, he had not a strange face for strange people. He did not make the gospel a charge to any one; his reward was souls and glory. His conversation was in heaven. Plain in dress and manners, when age had stamped its impress of reverence upon him, he filled the mind with the noble idea of a patriarch. At the head of a family, a father, a neighbor, a friend, a companion, there was one prominent feature of his character which distinguished him from most men;—it was goodness; you *felt* that he was good. His mind was strong and well stored with the learning necessary for one whose aim is to preach Christ with apostolic zeal and simplicity. The virtue of hospitality was practised by his family as a matter of course; and in following the impulse of their own generous natures, the members of his household obeyed the oft-repeated charge of their head to open his doors to the houseless, that the weary might be solaced and the hungry fed. And what a family was here presented to an observant visiter! Here was order, quiet,

occupation. The father, if not absent on a journey of five hundred miles in cold, hunger, privations, and labor, proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation to his dispersed German brethren, might, by his conduct under his own roof, explain to a careful looker-on the secret of a parent's success in rearing a family to the duties of piety, to the diligent and useful occupation of time, and to the uninterrupted exhibition of reflected and reciprocated love, esteem, and kindness in word and deed. If it is true, as is generally believed, that the mother does much toward forming the character of their children, it will be readily allowed that Martin Boehm had an able help-mate in his pious wife. The offspring of this noble pair have done them honor:—the son Jacob, immediately upon his marriage, took on himself the management of the farm, that his excellent father might, 'without carefulness,' extend his labors more far and wide. A younger son, Henry, is a useful minister in the Methodist connection, having the advantage of being able to preach in English and German. We are willing to hope that the children of Martin Boehm, and his children's children to the third and fourth and latest generations, will have cause to thank God that his house, for fifty years, has been a house for the welcome reception of gospel ministers, and one in which the worship of God has been uninterruptedly preserved and practised! O ye children and grandchildren! O, rising generation, who have so often heard the prayers of this man of God in the houses of your fathers! O, ye Germans, to whom he has long preached the word of truth, Martin Boehm being dead yet speaketh!—O hear his voice from the grave, exhorting you to repent, to believe, and to obey.'

"But our beloved brother, who has gone to his high reward, was not the only laborer in the vineyard. Will it be hazarding too much to say that in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, there were one hundred preachers and

twenty thousand people in the communion of the United Brethren? Many of these faithful men have gone to glory; and many are yet alive to preach to congregated thousands. Pre-eminent among these is William Otterbein, who assisted in the ordination which set apart your speaker to the superintendency of the Methodist Episcopal Church. William Otterbein was regularly ordained to the ministry in the German Presbyterian Church. He is one of the best scholars and the greatest divines in America. Why then is he not where he began? He was irregular. Alas, for us; the zealous are necessarily so to those whose cry has been, *put me into the priests' office, that I may eat a morsel of bread.* Ostervald has observed, 'Hell is paved with the skulls of unfaithful ministers.' Such was not Boehm. Such is not Otterbein; and now, his sun of life is setting in brightness: behold the saint of God leaning upon his staff, waiting for the chariots of Israel!

"I pause here to indulge in reflections upon the past. Why was the German reformation in the middle states, that sprang up with Boehm, Otterbein, and their helpers, not more perfect? Was money, was labor made a consideration with these primitive men? No; they wanted not the one, and heeded not the other. They all had had church membership, as Presbyterians, Lutherans, Moravians, Dunkers, Menonists. The spiritual men of these societies generally united with the reformers; but they brought along with them the formalities, superstitions, and peculiar opinions of religious education. There was no master-spirit to rise up and organize and lead them. Some of the ministers located, and only added to their charge partial traveling labors; and all were independent. It remains to be proved whether a reformation, in any country, or under any circumstances, can be perpetuated without a well-directed itinerancy. But these faithful men of God

were not the less zealous in declaring the truth because they failed to erect a church government. This was wished for by many; and among the first, perhaps, to discover the necessity of discipline and order, was Benedict Swoape of Pipe-creek, Frederick county: he became Otterbein's prompter as early as 1772, and called upon him to translate the general rules of the Methodists, and explain to their German brethren, wandering as sheep without a shepherd, their nature, design, and efficacy. Otterbein, one of the wisest and best of men, could only approve: when urged to put himself forward as a leader, his great modesty and diffidence of himself forbade his acceptance of so high a trust. His journeys, nevertheless, were long, his visits frequent, and his labors constant; so that, after he came to Baltimore, he might be called a traveling preacher, until age and infirmities compelled him to be still. Surely I should not forget his helpers. I may mention once more Benedict Swoape: he removed to Kentucky, and preached until near his death at eighty years of age. There was the brother-in-law of Otterbein, and his great friend, Doctor Hendel, a man of talents, lettered and pious, and a great preacher. Hendel was first stationed, as a German Presbyterian minister, in Tulpahocking and Lancaster, and his last labors were in Philadelphia, where, late in life, he fell a victim to the yellow fever of 1798. Wagner, a pupil of Otterbein's, was stationed in Little-York, Pennsylvania, and permanently, thereafter, in Fredericktown, Maryland: he was, we have reason to hope, a good and useful servant of his Lord. Henry Widener, first a great sinner, and afterward a great saint, was a native of Switzerland; as is usual with his educated countrymen, he spoke in German and French with equal fluency. His preaching was acceptable and useful; he had for the companion of his itinerant labors, John Hagerty; and the gospel of our Lord was preached

by these men in German and English to thousands between the north and south branches of the Potomac. Widener died in peace near Baltimore. Hagerty is still with us. George Adam Gedding, a native of Germany, has been a most acceptable man in the work: he still lives near Sharpesburg, in Maryland. Christian Newcomer, near Hagerstown in Maryland, has labored and traveled many years. His heart's desire has always been to effect a union between his German brethren and the Methodists. Are there many that fear God who have passed by his house and have not heard of or witnessed the piety and hospitality of these Newcomers? Worthy people!

"I will not forget Abraham Traxall, now in the west of Pennsylvania: a most acceptable preacher of method and energy. Henry and Christian Crumb, twin-brothers born, and twin-souls in zeal and experience: these were holy, good men, and members of both societies. John Hersay, formerly a Menonist; an Israelite: he is gone to rest. Abraham and Christian Hersay; occasional itinerants, good men; busy and zealous. David Snyder possessing gifts to make himself useful. Neisch Wanger, a good man and good preacher. Most of these men were natives of Pennsylvania. May I name Leonard Harburgh, once famous, gifted, laborious, useful? He is now only a great mechanic, alas! The flame of German zeal has moved westward with emigration. In Ohio we have Andrew Teller, and Benedem, men of God, intrusted with a weighty charge, subjecting them to great labors. But our German fathers have lost many of their spiritual children. Some have led away disciples after them, and established independent churches; some have returned whence they or their fathers came; and some have joined the Dutch Baptists. Our German reformers have left no journal or record, that I have seen or heard of by which we might

learn the extent of their labors; but from Tennessee, where the excellent Baker labored and died, through Virginia and Maryland into Pennsylvania, as far eastward as Buck's and Berk's counties, the effects of their ministry were happily seen and felt. We feel ourselves at liberty to believe that these German heralds of grace congregated one hundred thousand souls; that they have had twenty thousand in fellowship and communion, and one hundred zealous and acceptable preachers.

"The following paper was found in the hand-writing of Bishop Asbury, and, as it is believed, of the Rev. Wm. Otterbein:—

'*To the Rev. William Otterbein.*

Sir,—Where were you born?'

Ans. In Nassau, Dillenburg, in Germany.

Quest. How many years had you lived in your native land?

Ans. Twenty-six years.

Quest. How many years have you resided in America?

Ans. Sixty years, come next August

Quest. Where were you educated?

Ans. In Herborn; in an academy.

Quest. What languages and sciences were you taught?

Ans. Latin, Greek, Hebrew, philosophy, and divinity.

Quest. In what order were you set apart for the ministry?

Ans. The Presbyterian form and order.

Quest. What ministers assisted in your ordination?

Ans. Shrim and Klinghoaffer.

Quest. Where have you had charge of congregations in America?

Ans. First in Lancaster; in Tulpahocking, in Fredericktown in Maryland, in Little-York in Pennsylvania, and in Baltimore.

Quest. In what parts of the United States have you

frequently traveled through, in the prosecution of your ministerial labors?

Ans. In Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

Quest. How many years of your life, since you came to this country, were you in a great measure an itinerant?

Ans. The chief of the time since my coming to this continent, but more largely since coming to Baltimore.

Quest. By what means were you brought to the gospel knowledge of God and our Saviour?

Ans. By degrees was I brought to the knowledge of the truth while in Lancaster.

Quest. Have you an unshaken confidence in God through Christ of your justification, sanctification, and sure hope of glorification?

Ans. The Lord has been good to me; and no doubt remains in my mind but he will be good; and I can now praise him for the hope of a better life.

Quest. Have you ever kept any account of the seals to your ministry?

Ans. None.

Quest. Have you ever taken an account of the members in the societies of the United German Brethren?

Ans. Only what are in Baltimore.

Quest. Have you taken any account of the brethren introduced into the ministry immediately by yourself, and sent out by you? Can you give the names of the living and the dead?

Ans. Henry Widener, Henry Becker, Simon Herre, in Virginia; these are gone to their reward. Newcomer can give the names of the living.

Quest. What ministerial brethren who have been your helpers, can you speak of with pleasure, and whose names are precious?

Ans. Guedick, Widener, Herre. Newcomer, and others,

Quest. What is your mind concerning John Wesley, and the order of Methodists in America?

Ans. I think highly of John Wesley. I think well of the Methodists in America.

Quest. What are your views of the present state of the church of Christ in Europe and America, and of prophecy?

Ans. In continental Europe the church has lost, in a great degree, the light of truth. In England and America the light still shines. Prophecy is hastening to its accomplishment.

Quest. Will you give any commandment concerning your bones, and the memoirs of your life? your children in Christ will not suffer you to die unnoticed.'

No answer to this last question."

In his journal the bishop makes the following remarks respecting Mr. Otterbein:—

"By request I discoursed on the character of the angel of the Church of Philadelphia, in allusion to P. W. Otterbein—the holy, the great Otterbein—whose funeral discourse it was intended to be. Solemnity marked the silent meeting in the German Church, where were assembled the members of our conference and many of the clergy of the city. Forty years have I known the retiring modesty of this man of God—towering majestic above his fellows in learning, wisdom, and grace, yet seeking to be known only of God and the people of God. He had been sixty years a minister, fifty years a converted one."

This year also, the Church, in both hemispheres, was called to mourn over the death of Dr. Coke. Having been released in 1808, from his obligations to the American conference, he devoted himself thenceforward to the cause of God in Europe, with his accustomed zeal and fervor, but more especially

to the cause of missions. While engaged in this work his attention was directed to the deplorable state of things in British India. The researches of Buchanan, and the accounts of others who had traveled in that country, had awakened a zeal in the hearts of British Christians for the salvation of the idolaters of Asia, which now burned with intense ardor in the breast of Dr. Coke, and he determined, if Providence favored his design, to establish a mission for their benefit. Having made the necessary preparations, in company with seven others whom he had selected to accompany him as assistant missionaries, on the 30th of December, 1813, he took an affectionate leave of his friends at Portsmouth, and on the 1st of January, 1814, they all proceeded down the English Channel, and slowly entered upon that voyage which for ever separated Dr. Coke from the land of his nativity and the scene of his active labors.

On the morning of the 3d day of May, 1814, in latitude two degrees twenty minutes south, and longitude fifty-nine degrees twenty-nine minutes east from London, when the servant went, according to his orders, to call Dr. Coke from his slumbers, on opening the door of his cabin, he found, to his utter amazement, the body of the doctor stretched lifeless upon the floor! The intelligence of this mournful event being communicated first to the captain of the ship, and then, at his request, to the missionaries, produced, as might be expected, a sensation of sorrow not easily described. It was supposed by the medical gentlemen who, at the request of the missionaries, made a post mortem examination, that he died of a fit of apoplexy. As his body was stiff and cold when it was

discovered, at about half past five o'clock in the morning, and was found stretched upon the floor, it was concluded that, feeling unwell in the night, he had arisen from his bed to obtain some medicine, when he fell at about midnight to rise no more until the resurrection of the just and unjust.

Finding it impracticable to preserve the corpse in that hot climate to be brought back to England, according to his request in his will, to be deposited by the side of his two wives whom he had buried in Brecon, his native town in Wales, at about half past five o'clock, P. M., of the same day, the dead body was committed to the deep with suitable religious ceremonies, the performance of which, under these solemn circumstances, produced very serious impressions on all present.

Thus ended the life and labors of *Thomas Coke, LL.D.*, and first bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. And while we record his death, we cannot well forget the many obligations we, as a Church, are under to him for his most zealous and disinterested labors among us in the infancy of our Church, and the consequent feebleness in which we were when he first visited our Zion.

It is not, however, my intention to attempt a portraiture of his character, nor to enumerate the instances of his labors and sacrifices. This has been amply and ably done by his biographer, to whom the reader is referred for a full account of the life, education, conversion, and ministerial labors, both as a preacher and writer, of Dr. Coke. And the preceding pages will show the high estimation in which he was held on both sides of the Atlantic, the relation he sustained

to us, the labors he performed and the lively interest he manifested in the welfare of American Methodism. It is due, nevertheless, to him and to the cause he contributed so materially to aid in this country, to say, that he crossed the Atlantic no less than eighteen times, at his own expense, to serve his American brethren—that while here he exerted a powerful and salutary influence in favor of pure religion, by his preaching and the weight of his character—and that, though he might, on one or two occasions, have incautiously committed himself and his brethren to those who watched his movements not with the most friendly eye, yet he deserves and receives the thankful and affectionate remembrance of those who have been benefitted by his labors, and know how to appreciate his excellences.

And if at any time he was not treated, in his intercourse with his American brethren, with that respectful attention which was due to his character—as was doubtless the case—he manifested the spirit of his Master and Saviour, in throwing over all such instances of human frailty the mantle of forgiveness and oblivion, neither abating the ardor of his love nor slackening the speed of his diligence to do them good, by serving them so long as his services were required. And if his spirit, disenthralled from its cumbersome house of clay, is now permitted to look from its mansion above, over the wide space covered by the ministry and Church he helped to organize and set in motion, he no doubt derives one source of his joy from the recollection of what he suffered and did in maturing and executing the plans which have resulted in the redemption and salvation of so many souls, and

looking up to the holy throne, he unites with all the redeemed from among men, in ascribing the honor of all this to God and the Lamb.

At the session of the New-York conference in 1815, which assembled that year in the city of Albany on the 12th day of May, the melancholy news of Dr. Coke's sudden death had just reached our shores through the public papers, and, at the request of the conference, Bishop Asbury preached his funeral discourse. In this discourse the bishop bore ample testimony to the exalted character, the Christian and ministerial virtues, of his deceased friend and colleague. The following are some of his remarks, as I find them recorded in his journal:—

"He was of the third branch of the Oxonian Methodists—of blessed mind and soul—a gentleman, a scholar, and a bishop to us—as a minister of Christ, in zeal, in labors, and in services, the greatest man of the last century."

Locations still continued to weaken the ranks of the itinerancy by forcing us to supply the circuits with young and inexperienced men, who, though they were zealous and active, were necessarily deficient in that sound practical wisdom which is desirable in the ministry, more especially for the judicious administration of discipline. No less than sixty-five were located this year, namely, in the Ohio conference nine, the Tennessee five, the South Carolina twelve, the Virginia fifteen, the Baltimore five, the Philadelphia seven, New-York one,* New-England eight, and Gene-

* For a few years past, some of the older members of the New-York conference, deprecating the weakening effects of these numerous locations, determined to hold on to the itine-

see three. There were twenty returned on the supernumerary list, and twenty-two on the superannuated, and one was expelled. *Ralph Lotspeich, Leroy Merritt, William Mills, Peter Moriarty, Francis Ward, Abner Clark,* and *Anning Owen,* having fulfilled their ministry with fidelity, had taken their departure from the field of labor to the land of rest.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	168,698	42,431	211,129	687
Last year	171,448	42,859	214,307	678
Decrease	2,750	428	3,178	In. 9

This unusual decrease shows that the effects of the war, as has been remarked above, had been unfriendly to the interests of religion.

1815. At this time the principal labor of the superintendency devolved on Bishop M'Kendree, the wisdom of whose administration was generally appreciated by both the ministry and membership; for Bishop Asbury, though still moving around among the churches, was too feeble to render much assistance in the active business of the conferences. He, however, met his colleague at the conferences, fixed the stations of the preachers, preached occasionally, and for a short season at a time took his seat in the conferences. Here he was uniformly greeted with a hearty welcome, and venerated as the patriarch of the American Methodist Episcopal Church.

After recording the incidents of his travels through

rancy themselves, whatever the sacrifice might be, and induce as many others as possible to follow their example.

the several states, preaching often, distributing Testaments to the poor, visiting families and praying with them, as well as soliciting pecuniary aid for the poorer preachers by presenting to his friends his "mite subscription," he gives the following account of his interview with Bishop M'Kendree:—

"We had a long and earnest talk about the affairs of our Church, and my future prospects. I told him my opinion was, that the western part of the empire would be the glory of America for the poor and the pious—that it ought to be marked out for five conferences, to wit, Ohio, Kentucky, Holston, Mississippi, and Missouri—in doing which, as well as I was able, I traced out lines and boundaries. I told my colleague, that having passed the first allotted period, (seventy years,) and being, as he knew, out of health, it could not be expected that I could visit the extremities every year, sitting in eight, it might be twelve conferences, and traveling six thousand miles in eight months. If I was able still to keep up with the conferences, I could not be expected to preside in more than every other one. As to the stations, I should never exhibit a plan unfinished, but still get all the information in my power, so as to enable me to make it perfect, like the painter who touches and retouches until all parts of the picture are pleasing. The plan I might be laboring on would always be submitted to such eyes as ought to see it; and the measure I meted to others I should expect to receive."

How fallacious often is hope! This conversation, though it exhibits a mind ever intent on the best interests of the Church, in thus maturing plans for its future prosperity, was like the flickering light of an expiring lamp, which, before it is entirely extinguish-

ed, flares up suddenly and then goes out for ever. Such indeed was the general debility of Bishop Asbury that he had to be lifted in and out of his carriage, and if he visited the conference room at all, it was only to astonish his friends with the sudden corruscations of light which beamed from a mind pent up in a body trembling under the ravages of disease and the infirmities of age. But he had been so long accustomed to constant traveling and preaching, that this habitual exercise seemed essential to life and comfort, and no doubt contributed to lengthen his days, which were now nevertheless speedily drawing to their close.

The war, which had now raged with various degrees of violence and success, for about three years, was near its termination. Though the battle of New-Orleans was fought on the 8th of January, 1815, and several naval victories were won upon the ocean after that event, yet the articles of peace were signed by the British and American commissioners at Ghent on the 24th of December, by which an end was soon put to this bloody struggle, greatly to the joy of the friends of human happiness on both sides of the Atlantic, and much more to those along the lines of Canada and the United States, where so much human suffering had been realized.

But though such places had severely felt the deleterious effects of this scourge of humanity, especially on the interests of true religion, yet in places not so much exposed to the ravages of war the work of God had prospered during the past year. Since, however, the commencement of hostilities, there had been a check put upon the extension of the work among the people

on the frontiers, as well as upon the advancement of the settlements themselves. The Indian tribes had been generally enlisted on one side or the other of the belligerents, had invaded each other's territories, and thus kept the exterior settlements in a continual state of fear and alarm, of excitement and irritation—a state of things exceedingly unfriendly to religious enjoyment and effort. It will therefore be seen that, after deducting for withdrawings, expulsions, and deaths, which is always done in taking the number of Church members, the increase this year was very small, and hence it may be presumed that the spirit of piety was rather low throughout our borders generally.

Sixty-seven were located, thirteen were returned supernumerary, twenty-two superannuated, one expelled, and four had died. Two of the last, namely, *John M'Claskey* and *Michael Coate*, had been long and favorably known to the Church, highly distinguished for their deep piety, indefatigable and useful labors; and in their death they gave a lively testimony to the power of religion to sustain them in their passage to immortality and eternal life. Though the race of the others, *Lewis Hobbs* and *William S. Fisher*, was comparatively short, yet it was brilliant, and ended as it began, in the grace of God, and in the hope of an eternal reward.

Numbers in the Church.

	Whites.	Colored.	Total.	Preachers.
This year	167,978	43,187	211,165	704
Last year	168,698	42,431	211,129	687
Decrease	720	In. 756	36	17

2

1816. Peace being restored to the country, business began to resume its usual channels, and the people to attend to their concerns with their wonted cheerfulness and diligence, and we find this year Upper and Lower Canada, which had been insulated during the war, was included among the districts of the Genesee conference, though Quebec was supplied, at the request of the people in that place, by the mission committee in London. But though this calm appeared in the civil atmosphere, the effects of the late storms of war and bloodshed were still visible along the highways and fields in which God's servants were called to labor. The southwestern frontiers were in some places disturbed by Indian depredations, and in other parts of the country the exasperations of spirit which had been excited by conflicting opinions respecting the policy of the late war, and the manner in which it was waged, were not yet wholly allayed, and hence the spirit of piety had not yet recovered its wonted healthy tone and vigorous action; and the manner in which the rejoicings and thanksgivings for the return of peace were held, in many instances, served rather to feed than to extinguish the flame of political strife and animosity, as well as to call forth and strengthen the warlike propensities of the human heart. In some places, however, a spirit of devout gratitude to the Author of all good was cherished in the sanctuary, where the people of God prostrated themselves before His throne, and after lifting their hearts to Him in fervent acknowledgments of praise and thanksgiving for the restoration of peace and its attendant blessings, were entertained from the pulpit with a rehearsal of his loving-kindness to the nation

and to the Church. These were seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and tended to enlarge the soul with enlightened views of the divine character and goodness, to revive and nourish the spirit of piety, and to unite the feeling of true patriotism with a sense of pious gratitude.

But, though the superintendents, as far as they were able, attended to their duties in the general work, and the preachers watched over their respective flocks with their wonted diligence and zeal, there were no special revivals of the work of God, and hence the increase of numbers was small, notwithstanding the members in Canada were this year included in the enumeration.

We have already seen that Bishop Asbury's declining health prevented him from performing much active service, and that consequently the duties of the superintendency devolved chiefly on Bishop M'Kendree. He accordingly moved around among the churches, attended the northern conferences alone, and by his example of diligence, and his advice in the councils of the Church, endeavored to diffuse the spirit of piety and active zeal throughout our borders. And all things considered, we had reason for thankfulness to God that he had not forsaken his Church in the wilderness.

Sixty-three were located this year, eight returned supernumerary, thirty-two superannuated, two were expelled, and one had withdrawn.

The following had exchanged the field of labor for the land of rest:—

Learner Blackman, who embraced religion in his youth, and in 1800 entered the traveling ministry.

After making full proof of his ministry in various circuits in the older conferences, in 1805, at the request of the bishops, he followed in the track of Tobias Gibson into the Mississippi Territory, and was stationed on the Natchez circuit. In performing this journey through the wilderness, in which he was compelled to encamp in the woods ten or eleven nights, he was called to endure hardships which the Methodist preachers of those days felt more sensibly than it is easy adequately to describe. But neither the savages of the wilderness, the lonely deserts through which they were obliged to pass to reach their destined post, nor the labors to be performed or privations to be endured, could prevent such souls as that which actuated Blackman from pressing forward in the path of duty.

On his arrival in Natchez, though he found a few who had been brought to God by the instrumentality of his eminent predecessor, Tobias Gibson, yet Methodism was in its infancy, and he had to contend with a variety of hinderances which were thrown in his way by the lukewarmness of some, the entire indifference of others, and the open hostility of not a few.

He continued west of the mountains, laboring with pious zeal and indefatigable industry, filling, for a number of years, the office of presiding elder, until the day of his death. This mournful event heightened the sorrow of his friends by the manner in which it occurred. He and his consort were returning from a visit on the west side of the Ohio river, and while recrossing that river in a ferry-boat, their horses became frightened, and leaping out threw him into the river and he was drowned.

His eulogy is written in the affections of the people who had been blessed under his ministry. And though his death was sudden, and brought about in circumstances which forbade his friends from catching his dying words, yet the purity of his life, the faithfulness of his preaching, and the diligence with which he pursued his calling as an overseer of the flock of Christ, speak more emphatically than mere words could do, in favor of his preparedness to meet his Judge, in the hope of acceptance through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Richmond Nolley was another of those soldiers of Jesus Christ who won laurels of celestial glory in the western wilds. He entered the ranks of the itinerancy in 1808, and after traveling some circuits in the south, by which he gave evidence of his willingness to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ," he went on a mission to Tombigbee, in the territory of Alabama. Here he devoted two years of hard labor, filling his appointments with fidelity, though often walking on foot with his saddlebags upon his shoulders, besides instructing the people, black as well as white, from house to house.

Being in this country at the commencement of the hostilities between the United States and Great Britain, he had to contend with difficulties that arose from the movements of hostile Indians, which compelled the people in that new country to screen themselves from their fury in temporary forts. He, however, would not relax his labors, but went fearlessly from fort to fort, warning and instructing the people, often hazarding his life, and wearing out a constitution naturally

weak, for the sake of communicating spiritual benefit to immortal beings.

From this place he was removed, in 1814, to Attakapas circuit, in Louisiana. Here he was exposed to all the perils and hardships which are incident to such a new country, with bad roads, deep waters to cross, often scanty fare, flies and moschetoes in the midst of the wilderness, together with the intense heat of the summer, and the mud and mire of the winter months. None of these things, however, disheartened him. He went forward with firmness and patience, seeking for the "lost sheep of the house of Israel."

But his race was short, and his death sudden and sorrowful to his surviving friends. On the 24th of November, the weather being wet and cold, after having passed the previous day through a vast and dreary swamp, and over the Mississippi, he set off to visit some distant appointments. On the evening of that day he lodged with a friendly family; the next morning he pushed forward in a direction uninhabited by any white person, and employed an Indian to assist him in passing a creek, which he was apprehensive would be so swollen as to be difficult to ford. On arriving here, his expectations were realized; but he concluded to make the experiment to ford the stream. Leaving his saddle-bags, valise, and some books with his Indian guide, he mounted his horse and attempted to ride through the creek. The current bore his horse down below the usual place of landing, so that when they arrived on the other side, the bank was so precipitous that the horse could not ascend it, and in the struggle he and his horse were separated, the horse swimming back to the shore he had left, and

brother Nolley landing on the opposite bank. He then walked on with a view to reach the first house, which was about two miles distant. The wet and cold, however, so prostrated his physical strength that he was able to proceed only about one mile, where he was found next morning a lifeless corpse! It seems, from appearances, that, becoming conscious of his inability to proceed farther, he kneeled down and commended his spirit to God; and here in the woods he was found with his eyes neatly closed, his left hand on his breast, his right hand fallen off a little, while his immortal spirit had, beyond all doubt, ascended to its mansion above.

The name of Richmond Nolley lives in the recollection of the people in Alabama and Louisiana, and his ministerial and Christian virtues are embalmed in their affections. He fell a martyr to his work in the eighth year of his ministry, and has left behind him a testimony of his fidelity in the fruit of his sacrifices and labors.

Zachariah Witten, *Joel Arrington*, *Edwin Johnson*, *George Askin*, *Nathan Lodge*, and *James Quail*, had also taken their departure to another world, honored and beloved in their life as ministers of Christ, and lamented in their death by those who had been benefitted by their labors, and by their more intimate relations.

But a greater than either had fallen. The death-knell had sounded over the coffin of our American patriarch, and assured us that our ASBURY was no more!

And as this was the year in which Bishop Asbury closed his life and labors, I shall, as seems most fit, close the present volume with a brief account of the

closing days of that great and good man, together with some remarks on his general character and manner of life.

We have already seen that disease was making fearful inroads upon a constitution which had been shattered by frequent attacks of sickness, often induced from exposure to wind and weather, to hardships, privations, constant labor and care, and that he consequently exhibited symptoms of approaching dissolution. After the interview with Bishop M'Kendree, before mentioned, he still journeyed on, attended by his ever faithful companion, John Wesley Bond, passing through the state of Ohio to Kentucky, where, after preaching in Lexington, he says :—

"My soul is blest with continued consolation and peace in all my great weakness of body and crowds of company. I am a debtor to the whole continent, but more especially to the north-east and south-west; it is there I usually gain health, and generally lose it in the south and centre. I have visited the south thirty times in thirty-one years. I wish to visit Mississippi, but am resigned."

It would appear then that even the bounds of the ten conferences were not a sufficiently large range to fill his capacious desires—*he wished still to visit Mississippi!* But here again he found that his wishes must yield to the pressure of a body tottering on the confines of another world. Mississippi must be left to his sons in the gospel, while the father is forced to "withdraw his feet" even from the ordinary business of a conference, for on the 21st of this same month of October, after remarking that he had preached to the Tennessee conference, and ordained the deacons, he says,—

"My eyes fail. I will resign the stations to Bishop M'Kendree. I will take away my feet. It is my fifty-fifth year of ministry, and forty-fifth of labor in America. My mind enjoys great peace and divine consolation. My health is better, which may be in part because of my being less deeply interested in the business of the conference. But whether health, life, or death, good is the will of the Lord. I will trust him; yea, I will praise him. He is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever. Glory! glory! glory!" Fit language for a veteran of the cross of Christ, just ready to receive his crown.

In this frame of mind he passed on from place to place, stretching across the country from Tennessee into South Carolina, until, under date of Dec. 2, he says, "My consolations are great. I live in God from moment to moment;" and then Dec. 7, which is the last entry in his journal, and probably the last line he ever wrote, he says,—

"We met a storm and stopped at William Baker's, Granby."

It appears, however, from the published notice of his death, that he persevered in his customary way, in his close carriage, to journey on through the country, until March 24, 1816, when he came to Richmond, Virginia, where he preached his last sermon. His text was Rom. ix, 28, "For he will finish his work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." This closed *his* pulpit work.

So feeble was he that his friends endeavored to dissuade him from making this effort. He, however, resisted their importunities by remarking that he must once more deliver his testimony in that place. They

therefore assisted him from his carriage—for he was unable either to walk or stand—to the pulpit, and seated him on a table which had been prepared for that purpose: and though his debility was such that he was obliged to make frequent pauses in the course of his sermon, yet the audience were much affected by the manner in which he delivered his last solemn message, but much more with his appearance, venerable with age, standing on the borders of eternity, pale and tremulous with debility, while the deep intonations of his commanding voice, rising with the grandeur of his subject, gave a solemnity to the whole scene of a most impressive character.

Having thus delivered his last testimony for God, he was assisted from the sanctuary to his carriage, in which he returned to his lodgings.

On Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, he moved on his way, and finally came to the house of his old friend, Mr. George Arnold, in Spottsylvania, Virginia. Here the unfavorable state of the weather and his increasing debility obliged him to stop. He had, indeed, flattered himself with living to meet the General Conference which was to assemble in Baltimore on the second day of the ensuing May; but he had approached the termination of his journeyings in this world, and he humbly bowed to the decree of his heavenly Father in this as well as in all other things.

Here he passed a very restless night. In the morning, his friends, perceiving his great distress and increasing weakness, urged the propriety of calling in the aid of a physician. He gave them to understand that it would be of no use, saying, that before the physician could come to him his breath would be

gone, and the doctor would only pronounce him dead. Being then asked if he had any thing to communicate, he replied, that as he had fully expressed his mind to Bishop M'Kendree in relation to the Church, he had nothing more to add.

About eleven o'clock on Sabbath morning he inquired if it were not time for meeting; but soon recollecting himself, he requested the family to be called together. This being done, brother Bond sung, prayed, and expounded the twenty-first chapter of the Apocalypse, during which the bishop appeared calm and much engaged in devotion. After these exercises were closed, they offered him a little barley water, but such was his weakness that he could not swallow it, and his power of utterance began to fail. On observing the anxiety of his beloved companion, who had attended him with such commendable assiduity for so long a time, he raised his dying hand, and at the same time looked at him joyfully. On being asked by brother Bond if he felt the Lord Jesus precious, exerting all his remaining strength in token of a complete victory, he raised both his hands.

In a few minutes after this, as he sat on his chair with his head reclining upon the hand of brother Bond, without a struggle, and with great composure, he breathed his last on Sabbath the 31st of March, 1816, in the seventy-first year of his age.

His remains were deposited in Spottsylvania, in the family burying ground of Mr. Arnold, at whose house he died. But on the assembling of the General Conference in Baltimore, by its order, and at the request of the brethren in that city, the mortal remains of Bishop Asbury were removed to Baltimore, and depo-

sited under the recess of the pulpit of the Eutaw-street church, in a vault which had been prepared for that purpose.

The corpse was followed from the conference room in Light-street, by the members of the General Conference, several clergymen of other denominations, and by a vast concourse of the citizens of Baltimore, being preceded by Bishop M'Kendree as the officiating minister, attended by Mr. Black, a representative from the British to the American conference, to the Eutaw-street church, where a funeral oration was delivered by Bishop M'Kendree. After this the body of this great man of God was committed to its tomb, to await the hour when "all that are in their graves shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation."

The following inscription reminds the visiter to this sacred spot of the man to whose memory the polished marble was erected:—

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REVEREND FRANCIS ASBURY,
BISHOP OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

He was born in England, August 20th, 1745;
Entered the ministry at the age of 17;
Came a missionary to America, 1771;
Was ordained Bishop in this city, December 27th, 1784;
Annually visited the conferences in the United States;
With much zeal continued to "preach the word,"
FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY.
And
literally ended his labors with his life,
near *Fredericksburg*, *Virginia*,

in the full triumphs of faith, on the 31st of March, 1816.
Aged 70 years, 7 months, and 11 days.
His remains were deposited in this vault, May 10th, 1816,
by the GENERAL CONFERENCE then sitting in this city.
His journals will exhibit to posterity
his labors, his difficulties, his sufferings,
his patience, his perseverance, his love to God and man.

A number of funeral sermons were preached in different places for our departed superintendent, some of which were afterward published; and the Baltimore conference engaged a gentleman of competent talents to write his life, which, however, was never completed; and after waiting until 1824 for its appearance the General Conference selected the Rev. William Beauchamp to complete the task, but he was called home before he had time to enter upon his work; and thus a life of Bishop Asbury has never been furnished the world. This defect I have endeavored, so far as my general plan would admit, to supply, by giving some of the most important items in his experience, travels, and labors, and shall conclude by a few general remarks on some prominent features of his character. But even these must necessarily be imperfect, not only from my want of ability to do justice to a character so exalted, seen through such a variety of mediums, and presenting so many varying points, but also for want of room to say all that truth and justice would seem to require.

1. The first thing we notice is the *depth of his experience as a Christian.* This infused a new principle of action, constituted the purity of his motives, and sanctified all his conduct. This experience of divine grace penetrates into the depths of the soul, and brings up, having changed the heart and sancti

fied the affections, new desires, excites new emotions, and gives new views of God, of man, of human destiny, and the end of all human actions.

Let those who have been accustomed to estimate human conduct from motives of self-interest, ambition, or worldly policy, recollect that when the heart is renewed by grace, there springs up a new motive of action, and new hopes of reward, which exalt the individual as far above the mere man of the world as the heavens are high above the earth. That young Asbury was blessed with this new creation, by that Holy Spirit which ever after wrought mightily in him to the subduing of all unholy propensities, must be manifest to all who have consulted the preceding pages.

2. *His call to the work of the ministry* was evidently of a divine character. Born in humble life, destined by his parents and his own choice for a mechanical pursuit, neither he nor they had any thought of his becoming a minister of the sanctuary, until it was made manifest to him and to others competent to judge, that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him. He was then not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but entered upon his work with all his soul and strength, and continued with unabated ardor and diligence until he ceased "at once to work and live."

3. *His talents as a preacher* must be estimated in connection with those other duties which devolved upon him as the superintendent of the Church. It is said by those who had the privilege of hearing him in the vigor of manhood, before time and care had wrinkled his forehead, that he was deep and systematical in his discourses, ably and "rightly dividing the

word of truth," fluent and powerful in his delivery, as well as remarkably pointed in his appeals to the consciences of his hearers. His attitude in the pulpit was graceful, dignified, and solemn; his voice full and commanding; his enunciation clear and distinct; and sometimes a sudden burst of eloquence would break forth in a manner which spoke a soul full of God, and like a mountain torrent swept all before it.

I remember an instance of this in the city of Baltimore in 1808, while he was preaching on a Sabbath morning in the Eutaw-street church, in the presence of many members of the General Conference, and among others, the Rev. Mr. Otterbein sat by his side in the pulpit. The bishop was discoursing upon the duty of parents to their children. Having uttered a severe reproof to those who neglect this duty and indulge their children in the frivolities of the world, he suddenly paused, and then said, "But you will say this is hard. Alas," he added—letting his voice which had been raised into that high commanding tone which gave such a majesty to what he uttered, suddenly fall to a low and soft key,—"It is harder to be damned!" These words, dropping from his lips in a manner which indicated the deep sensations of his heart, fell upon the audience, now wrought up to the highest pitch of intensity by what had preceded them, like the sudden bursting of a cloud upon the mown grass, and they were in a moment melted into tears—sobs and groans were heard all over the house. The venerable Otterbein, noble and dignified in his appearance, was turned into a little child—the tears furrowing his cheeks—bespeaking the deep feelings of his heart.

But though Bishop Asbury was thus able and systematic in his preaching in the earlier days of his ministry, as other duties accumulated, the cares of the superintendency multiplied, and his travels necessarily enlarged, it seemed impossible for him to give that attention to reading and study which is essential for a full development and vigorous exercise of the mental powers. Hence in his latter days his manner of preaching changed—he was often quite unmethodical in his arrangement—sometimes abruptly jumping, if I may so express it, from one subject to another, intermingling anecdotes of an instructive character, and suddenly breaking forth in most tremendous rebukes of some prevalent vice, and concluding with an admonition full of point and pathos. Yet he always exhibited a mind deep and solemn, ever intent upon securing the salvation of his own soul and the souls of those who heard him.

4. For diligence in his calling, he was surpassed by no one, unless we may except the ever active Wesley; and for suffering privations and enduring hardships, he even far exceeded his prototype; inasmuch as the former was not called, in the discharge of his important duties, to such a rugged and extensive field of labor as that into which Bishop Asbury was thrust.

During the forty-five years of his ministry in America, allowing that he preached on an average one sermon a day—and he often preached three times on the Sabbath—he delivered not less than sixteen thousand four hundred and twenty-five sermons, besides his lectures to the societies, and meeting classes; allowing him six thousand miles a year, which, it is

believed he generally exceeded, he must have traveled during the same time about two hundred and seventy thousand miles, much of it on the very worst of roads; from the time of the organization of the Church in 1784, to the period of his death, thirty-two years, allowing an average of seven conferences a year, he sat in no less than two hundred and twenty four annual conferences, and in their infancy their entire business devolved chiefly on himself; and he probably consecrated, including traveling and local preachers, more than four thousand persons to the sacred office! Here, then, is a missionary bishop worthy of the name, whose example may be held up for the imitation of all who engage in this sacred work.

We have spoken of his travels. He was no idle traveler, nor did he ever journey for pleasure. As before noticed, to aid him in scattering the good seed of the kingdom, he distributed religious tracts, Bibles, and Testaments; and "into whatsoever house he entered," he not only said, "Peace be to this house," but he addressed himself to its inmates personally on the subject of religion, and let their character be whatever it might, unless absolutely prohibited, he never left them without prayer. In this exercise he was indeed mighty. As he frequently remarked that "he lived in God from moment to moment," so his prayers indicated the most intimate communion with Him and with his Son Jesus Christ. Though great in the pulpit, and strong in the government which he exercised, yet prayer seemed to be his forte, the delightful element of his soul. Though never boisterous in his manner, but solemn and devout, yet his prayers were comprehensive, frequent, and fervent, and some-

times attended with such an unction from the holy one, as made it evident that he was in truth in audience with the Deity.

5. With all his other excellences, perhaps Bishop Asbury never appeared so great as in the tact of *governing the conferences.* He had deeply studied the character of man, and well understood the various springs of human action. But that which gave him such a commanding influence over others, was the confidence which he had inspired in his wisdom and integrity. The manner in which he had deported himself from the time he first landed on our shores, convinced all with whom he had intercourse that he "sought not his own but them," and that the high ends he aimed to accomplish, were the present and future salvation of immortal beings. His deadness to the world, to human applause, to riches and worldly honors, and his deep devotion to God, made an impression upon all who bore witness to his spirit and conduct, that he was actuated by the purest and most elevated motives and views. This pervading impression wrought that confidence in the uprightness of his intentions and wisdom of his plans, which gave him such a control over both preachers and people as enabled him to discharge the high trusts confided to him, with so much facility and to such general satisfaction. Hence the apparent ease with which he managed the complicated machinery of Methodism, guided the councils of the conferences, fixed the stations of the preachers, and otherwise exercised his authority for the general good of the entire body.

It is true, he did not escape censure. "The archers shot at him;" but "his bow abode in strength."

That a man occupying such an elevated station, and exerting such an extensive influence as he did, should wholly escape censure, is more than could be expected, constituted as human society is. But these censures generally fell harmless at his feet. Armed as he was "with the whole armor of God," he repelled "all the fiery darts" of his adversaries, and stood firm in the defence of the cause he had espoused, and in a holy consciousness of an upright mind and a blameless conduct.

It has indeed been objected to him that in the exercise of that attribute of power with which he was invested, he sometimes manifested a sternness bordering upon a hardheartedness which cannot be justified. Not knowing the sympathies of a husband and a father from actual experience,* and accustomed as he

* It is generally known, I believe, that Bishop Asbury was never married. And as it will give the reader an idea of his thoughts on this subject, together with the reasons for his celibacy, I will here insert them, as I find them in his Journal, vol. iii, p. 128.

"If I should die in celibacy, which I think quite probable, I give the following reasons for what can scarcely be called my choice. I was called in my fourteenth year; I began my public exercises between sixteen and seventeen; at twenty-one I traveled; at twenty-six I came to America; thus far I had reasons enough for a single life. It had been my intention of returning to Europe at thirty years of age; but the war continued, and it was ten years before we had a settled, lasting peace: this was no time to marry or be given in marriage. At forty-nine I was ordained superintendent bishop in America. Among the duties imposed upon me by my office was that of traveling extensively, and I could hardly expect to find a woman with grace enough to enable her to live but one week out of the fifty-two with her husband: besides, what right has any man to take advantage of the affections of a woman, make her

was to make continual sacrifices himself in the cause of his Master, that he did not always make sufficient allowance for human frailties, and for the unavoidable ills which accompany a married traveling preacher, may be admitted without any impeachment of either his wisdom, goodness, or the tenderness of his nature.

But those who think Bishop Asbury was unfeeling, have very much misunderstood his character. Though he suitably detested that squeamishness of nature and whining disposition which leads some men always to complain of their hard lot, yet no man was usually more alive to the happiness of others, or more assiduously endeavored to accommodate the feelings and meet the wishes of all, so far as a good conscience and the dictates of a sound judgment would allow. I have heard him in open conference request the preachers to give him a representation of their cases before making out their stations, that he might understand their peculiar circumstances, and act accordingly—and also, even after the conference adjourned, have I known him to make alterations to accommodate a brother who thought himself aggrieved, or to meet a case not before known. In these respects he felt and acted as a father among his family.

his wife, and by a voluntary absence subvert the whole order and economy of the marriage state, by separating those whom neither God, nature, nor the requirements of civil society permit long to be *put asunder:* it is neither just nor generous. I may add to this that I had little money, and with this little administered to the necessities of a beloved mother until I was fifty-seven: if I have done wrong, I hope God and the sex will forgive me: it is my duty now to bestow the pittance I may have to spare upon the widows and fatherless girls, and poor married men."

It is true that in some instances, when oppressed with a multiplicity of cares, and assailed with numerous opposing claims, such as are known only to those who have had some experience in disposing of the stations of so many men, and perhaps thwarted in his good intentions by restless and fastidious spirits, who consulted their own interests more than the general good, he manifested some impatience and appeared unyielding in the decisions of his own mind. But if, at any time, he betrayed this weakness of human nature, like the well-tempered sword which, while it bends under the hand of him who tries its metal, quickly resumes its natural position, he soon regained his equanimity of mind, and sought the earliest opportunity to soothe the spirit of him he might have wounded.* And whatever errors he may have com-

* As an evidence of this disposition of mind, so amiable in itself, I give the following extract of a letter which I have in my possession, dated in New-York, May 7, 1812. It seems the bishop had before written to the person to whom this letter was directed, in which the latter thought the bishop in some indirect way, had accused him of a species of duplicity, and the preacher had requested an explanation. To this the bishop answers in the following manner :—

"My Dear Brother and Son :—It is impossible for me to enter into explanations. Unhappily suspicions have taken place, I said, I think, *among us*, including myself. I confess I had better not have said any thing. I did not mean a charge against you nor any innocent person. I am sorry I am not more prudent; but when I am called upon so often to speak and write, I am not sufficiently on my guard. I hope you will bear with me. I am persuaded of your uprightness. Brother * * * * has spoken in the highest terms of you to me, in word and letter. You will pardon me, and pray that I may say, do, and preach, and write better.

"I remain thine in Jesus,

"Francis Asbury."

mitted of this sort—and who is exempt from errors?—it was manifest to all that he aimed at the right, and perhaps oftener hit it than those who attempted to correct him, or who complained of his defective administration. Allowing the truth of what he says in one place, "the measure he meted to others he expected to receive," he must have acted under the influence of the golden rule in meting to others their portion of ministerial labor; and his constant example refuted all the calumnies of those who accused him of laying burdens upon others which he himself was unwilling to bear.

6. His charity knew no bounds but his ability. If a "bishop must be given to hospitality," and that he may be the more hospitable, "be temperate in all things," then did Bishop Asbury exhibit this excellent trait of the episcopal character. He literally begged from door to door to collect money to supply the wants of poor preachers, and so to aid them that the

I need hardly say that this letter melted the heart of the young preacher into tenderness, entirely removed his apprehensions, and gave him a more exalted opinion of his venerable bishop than he ever had before, and indeed made him feel ashamed of himself for having laid the bishop under an obligation to make such a concession.

Many such instances of ingenuous acknowledgment, in the same conciliatory strain, might be mentioned, greatly to the credit of his head and heart. As he was conscious that he was too fallible not to err, so he was too wise and good to persist in an error when convinced he had committed one; a virtue of rare occurrence among those who wilfully go astray, because the same perverse disposition which impels them to the one prevents them from the performance of the other. Sincere and honest himself, whatever errors he may have committed, they were of a venial character, and were therefore atoned for with the same frankness and readiness with which an honest mind would forgive and forget them.

"poor might have the gospel preached to them." How often, when cases of distress were revealed in an annual conference, would he arise from his chair, seize his broad-brimmed hat, and, with a pleasant smile upon his countenance, first drop in a piece of money himself, and then hand it round to the others, making all, by the humorous manner in which he did it, feel glad of the opportunity of contributing, though it might be nearly their last shilling, for such an object! Thus, by his example, he provoked others to liberality.

I believe, notwithstanding the change of the times, he never allowed himself to take over sixty-four dollars annually, and his traveling expenses; and though through the kindness of some friends who had bequeathed it to him, he was worth, when he died, besides his traveling apparatus, about two thousand dollars, yet he touched it not, but left it to the Book Concern, merely taxing it with the gift of a Bible to each of his nominal children, and an annuity to a dependent widow of a Methodist preacher.

7. He was not only "temperate in all things," but he seemed to hold in utter abhorrence all approaches to external pomp, and the trappings of worldly glory. The same broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat, which was in vogue when he entered the ministry, his entire costume corresponding with it in plainness and cheapness, he wore until the day of his death. And though the General Conference of 1812 passed a resolution requesting him to sit for his likeness to be drawn by a portrait painter of Philadelphia, yet on the adjournment of conference, he fled so precipitately from the city, that the secretary found it necessary to write a letter of apology to the gentleman concerned, stating

the reluctance of the bishop to have his portrait taken. And it was with no small difficulty that he was finally prevailed upon by his friends to gratify them with this boon. He, however, at last submitted to their importunity.

The gaudy tinsels of fashion, the feastings of the rich and luxurious, the struttings of upstart young men who strove to ape the giddy and the gay, drew from him the most severe and very often most mortifying reproofs. But his own example was a justification for his severity in this respect. Yet he was always neat in his personal appearance, being as far removed from the negligence of the sloven, as he was from the fashionable airs of the supercilious fop.

8. In this plain dress, with a mind richly stored with knowledge and a heart seasoned with grace, Bishop Asbury seemed a fit representative of a primitive evangelist, wearing not the tinselled mitre and flowing robes which decorate the persons of some modern bishops, but the grave attire which became an apostle, with his head silvered over with locks which had grown gray in a long and laborious service of his divine Master. Having a slender constitution, abstemious in his habits and living, suffering often from disease, and constantly exposed to wind and weather, burdened also with "the care of all the churches," there was rather a sombre cast upon his countenance, and at times somewhat of a forbidding aspect in an eye naturally bright and piercing.

Yet Bishop Asbury was not generally melancholy. Though at times subject to depression of spirits, and to temporary gloom, yet generally he was of a lively and cheerful disposition; sometimes, in conversation

with his friends, humorous and playful, yet always directing his anecdotes, of which he had a fund, to some good end, to render vice the more odious or virtue the more lovely.

9. In the discharge of his official duties in consecrating men to the office of deacons, elders, or bishops, he was remarkably solemn, dignified, and impressive. Who that has ever heard him say, in that solemn and commanding tone of voice which was to him natural and unaffected, "Take thou authority to preach the word of God, and to administer the holy sacraments in the congregation," has not felt a sensation of awe come over his mind, from the impressive and solemn manner in which the words were pronounced!

In reading the several parts of the consecration services, he would sometimes, from the overflowings of a full heart, break forth in an extemporaneous effusion, in language of deep affection, admonition, or instruction, in a manner which indicated the lively interest which he felt in the welfare of those to whom he addressed himself. But these extemporaneous addresses were always short, pithy, and directly to the point; for Bishop Asbury never wearied an audience with a dull prosing harangue on common-place topics, as if previously prepared for the nonce, and much less on occasions when an attempt to mend is only to mar the beautifully appropriate services, as laid down in the examination of candidates, and in the ordinal of the book. And the manner in which he propounded those pointed questions, plain and intelligible in themselves, made them sufficiently impressive without the aid of a lengthened comment, which more frequently weakens than strengthens

the sense; and the holy breathing of a devout soul which accompanied the devotional parts of the ordination services, which was so apparent when performed by Bishop Asbury, superceded the necessity of any extemporaneous effusions, especially in language less appropriate. This he knew perfectly well, and acted accordingly.

Yet, sometimes, when he arose from his knees, and commenced reading, he would occasionally throw in sentences, which for their point and appropriateness, would fall upon the ear with a force and emphasis that could hardly be resisted; and they were the more valuable because they seemed to come unpremeditatedly, springing up from a heart overflowing with the holiest and therefore the kindliest feeling.

I remember on one occasion, when laying his hands upon a young man who was kneeling at the altar to receive the office of deacon, the bishop, instead of commencing in the ordinary way, lifting up his eyes toward heaven, with his soul heaving under a pressure he seemed to feel, began thus:—"From the ends of the earth we call upon thee, O Lord God Almighty, to pour upon this thy servant the Holy Spirit, that he may *have authority*," &c.; and this was accompanied with such an unction from the Holy One, that the young minister was suddenly suffused in tears, while his nerves became so relaxed that he could hardly sustain himself on his knees.

At another time, being somewhat displeased at the gay attire of one of the candidates, and perceiving, as was supposed, an air of self-confidence in another, the bishop burst out into a strain of rebuke, mingled with the tenderest expostulation, in a manner which made

the ears of all that heard it to tingle, creating, in the mean time, a sudden sensation of abhorrence against every thing beneath the dignity, the gravity, and the holiness of the ministerial character. The words he used on this occasion are forgotten by the writer, but they were few, well chosen, and delivered with that deep feeling and solemnity, which no man unless he possess the same gift need attempt to imitate, lest he come under the suspicion of uttering what he neither feels nor understands.

These sententious, and often abrupt sentences, usually made a more deep and lasting impression upon the mind and heart than the most finished composition could have done, because they were thoughts of sudden inspiration, uttered spontaneously from the fulness of a heart always bearing upon it an impress of the divine image—a heart breathing in an atmosphere sanctified by the constant presence of his God.

What a thrill did he send through the congregation on a certain occasion, when, after having completed the ordination service in the city of Albany, he lifted up the Holy Bible, and exclaimed with an emphasis peculiar to himself, "This is the minister's battle-axe. This is his sword. Take this therefore and conquer!" These same words might have been uttered by another, and yet produce no effect. For it was not the words simply, but the manner and the occasion of using them which invested them with that sublimity, that solemn grandeur, and overwhelming pathos and power which produced the thrilling effect I have in vain attempted to describe. Those now living who have heard him may, however, comprehend my meaning, and hence

make up from their own recollection for the imperfection of my description.

10. Another trait in the character of Bishop Asbury was, the influence which he exerted over others in the social circle. In whatever company he appeared, whether religious or irreligious, whether high or low, learned or unlearned, he generally had such ascendancy over the minds of others, that he could easily lead the conversation, and thereby exert an influence in favor of religion highly beneficial to all concerned. Where he was known, such was the respect felt for his character, that great deference was paid to his judgment, and hence a greater desire was generally manifested by others to listen to his discourse, than to intrude their own opinions in the social circle.

It has already been observed that he seldom, if indeed ever, either visited others or received visiters, without praying with them before they separated. On a certain occasion, being indisposed, two of the most eminent physicians were employed to afford him their medical advice. When they had ended their services, the bishop asked them the amount of their demand. They very courteously and respectfully replied, that they desired nothing more than his prayers. The bishop then remarked that he never suffered himself to be in debt, and therefore he would discharge this obligation without delay, and instantly bowed upon his knees, and offered up a most fervent prayer to almighty God for the salvation of his generous medical friends. This took them upon surprise. It is said, indeed, that one of them was skeptically inclined, and was somewhat abashed to find himself so unceremo-

nigmly brought upon his knees for the first time in his life, to listen to the prayer of a Christian bishop, offered up in the name of a Savior in whom he had little or no faith.

The other who was in attendance, the late Dr. Benjamin Rush, with whom Bishop Asbury was on terms of intimacy, being as eminent for his Christian virtues as he was for his medical skill, was no less edified than delighted in this opportunity of participating with his friend in an act of devotion so highly creditable to his head and heart.

This perfect command of himself and of others enabled him to keep at a respectful distance all frivolous company, to awe into silence the facetious witling, as well as to secure the respect, love, and confidence of the wise and good with whom he associated. And though sometimes, in his extensive travels, he was thrown into promiscuous assemblages of men, especially when obliged to lodge in the public inns, he always availed himself of the opportunity to drop a word for God, nor would he depart without proposing prayer, and seldom, such influence had his personal appearance over the minds of others, was he denied the privilege of performing this duty.

11. It may be expected that I should speak of his faults. But what need of this? Have not all human beings human frailties? Why then dwell upon that which is common to man? But all men have not the virtues which adorned Bishop Asbury. These therefore may be selected, not so much indeed in praise of the man, as to "glorify the grace of God in him," which wrought mightily, to the destroying of all sinful desires, and which enabled him to "wrestle"

successfully against "principalities and powers," and to "triumph in Christ Jesus" over all opposition. In the midst, therefore, of these infirmities which are common to man, this grace of God in Christ shone out conspicuously, made him equal to his herculean task, and finally crowned him "more than a conqueror through Him who loved him.

But the sun has its spots. And though mindful of the maxim that we should "tread lightly on the ashes of the dead," I will venture to mention two things in which I think, with great deference indeed, he erred in his administration. In the first place, he and Dr. Coke having been baffled in their earlier attempts to establish seminaries of learning, I think Bishop Asbury, becoming discouraged from these failures, was at length too indifferent to this subject, especially in the ministry.

Probably having beheld the deleterious effects upon the Church by trusting to learning alone as a qualification for the ministry, and also seeing the disgusting pedantry of some who had a smattering knowledge of the sciences, he might have imbibed an undue prejudice against learning and a learned ministry, fearing that learning and deep piety were not easily associated in the same man. He had also long been a witness to the deadening effects of a lifeless, though learned ministry, upon the interests of true religion on the one hand, and the enlivening effects of a spiritual though unlearned ministry on the other; and he doubtless persuaded himself that it was extremely difficult to pursue the one without sacrificing the other. And as to general education, he thought that the Methodists were not called to devote their energies to the pro-

motion of this, but to preach the gospel, not considering probably that this might be done without leaving the other undone.

But whatever consideration might have influenced him, it is certain that after the destruction of Cokesbury College, and the failure of the district schools, he did not sufficiently encourage the pursuit of literature and science, and that some preachers who, in despite of every obstruction thrown in their way, manifested a determination to acquire all the knowledge within their reach, were sometimes checked in their progress from a fear of incurring the suspicion of being more ambitious to shine in the galaxy of literature than to be useful as ministers of the sanctuary. And it is highly probable that some who gave evidence of the existence of this weakness, by drawing forth the rebukes of the bishop, may have given birth to the suspicion. He knew perfectly well that "knowledge" without charity "puffeth up" the soul with vanity; and that while it is possible to be "spoiled with philosophy and vain conceit," it is equally possible for the minister of Christ, though destitute of the embellishments of human literature and science, to be useful to his fellow-men.

But though these considerations are offered as an apology for the indifference manifested by Bishop Asbury on the subject of education, they are not intended as a justifiable excuse for its general neglect for so many years by the Methodist Episcopal Church. It was a fault which will require years of bitter repentance and assiduous amendment to atone for, as it has thrown us behind the age in scientific and mental improvement, with whatever care and diligence we may

now redeem the time. It is, however, cause of gratitude that a redeeming spirit has gone abroad, which augurs well for the future prosperity and rising glory of the Church.

But whatever indifference he might have manifested toward the cause of education in general, he by no means neglected the improvement of his own mind. Though his constant traveling and the other indispensable duties of his office, prevented him from any regular and systematic pursuit of knowledge, yet he was, as far as his circumstances would permit, a hard student, a man of general information, much addicted to reading and study, and a close observer of passing events, of men, manners, and things. He was, indeed, in the habit of reading the sacred Scriptures in the languages in which they were first written, though his modesty in this respect prevented him from making any ostentatious show of learning. It is manifest, however, from his journal, though they were all erased in the revision which was made under his own inspection up to the year 1807, and was well known to his friends, that he was in the habit of referring for the illustration of difficult texts, to the original Scriptures, and to the critical interpretation of certain passages. Such, indeed, was the rich store of his knowledge, that he could bring "from his treasury things new and old," and he applied it all for the promotion of experimental and practical godliness.

The other defect in Bishop Asbury's administration, as I think, was the not encouraging the people sufficiently in making provision for their ministers, particularly for men of families. He did not, certainly, wish them to suffer from poverty, for he often, as we have before

seen, exerted himself, and gave his own money to supply their wants; but while he wished them to be above suffering pecuniary distress, he seemed to fear, that if they were too well off as it respects this world's goods, they would lose their zeal and spirituality, and thus cease to be useful; and as it was very congenial to that covetous disposition so natural to men, to withhold when they are not compelled to pay, many such quoted Bishop Asbury to justify their want of practical liberality.*

He was, no doubt justified in his fears respecting the freezing effects of worldly prosperity upon the spiritual interests of the soul, by the example of many, as well as by the admonitory language of the Saviour respecting the danger of riches; but it should be recollected that extreme poverty is as often associated with the vices of murmuring and fretfulness as riches are with luxurious indulgence; and that therefore, to avoid both the one and the other, a reasonable competency is the most desirable way, agreeably to the prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me."

Bishop Asbury considered the itinerant ministry, under God, as the grand instrument of the world's salvation. To support this therefore, in all its vigor and spirituality, he bent all his energies. And he feared that were the ministry to become wealthy,

* A certain steward of a circuit, when urged to exert himself to make a more ample provision for the support of their preachers, remarked that he had heard Bishop Asbury pray to the Lord to keep the preachers poor! The presiding elder to whom this was said replied, that "such a prayer in that place was quite unnecessary, as he and the people would, without any such prompting, see that this was done to perfection."

there would be so many temptations to locate that they could hardly be resisted. Hence, to prevent a catastrophe which must come upon the Church by the substitution of a located for a traveling ministry, he thought it essential to keep it aloof from the world, by preventing it from accumulating worldly property; yet it may be questioned whether more have not been induced to locate from a feeling or a fear of poverty, than by the enjoyment of a competency. This, at least, has been the pretence, and no doubt, in numerous instances, the real cause. And had a competent provision been timely made for the support of itinerant ministers, and for the suitable education of their children, I have no doubt we should have been far stronger every way, in wisdom, in numbers, in ministerial talent and usefulness, if not also in holiness and general prosperity.

Thus have I, according to the best of my judgment, and under a consciousness of the infirmities which are the common lot of humanity, honestly expressed my views of the character of one of the most holy, laborious, and useful men that ever trod the American soil. Others may have exceeded him in general literature, in systematic and various branches of knowledge; but in the depth and genuineness of his experience, in his knowledge of the human heart and character, as well as of theological truth, in the art of government, in varied and useful labors, in the extent of his travels, and severity of his sufferings in the cause of Christ, he stands perhaps unrivalled among American preachers.

The defects above noticed no more detract from the general excellence of his character than the fleet-

ing clouds do from the glory of the sun. They are lost amid the general effulgence which shines out from every aspect of his moral and intellectual countenance. He has, indeed, imprinted his image upon the institutions of the Church he was instrumental in building up in this western world; and he "finished his course with joy," went down to the grave with an unsullied reputation, and bequeathed to his brethren in the ministry and to the Church generally a name and a character not only untarnished, but resplendent with every ministerial and Christian virtue.

Concluding Remarks.

When I commenced writing, my intention was to complete the history by bringing it down to the present time, in two moderate-sized volumes, but it has lengthened out on my hands far beyond my expectation, when I began; and being frequently exhorted by friends in whose judgment I have much confidence, not to abridge, and my own convictions coinciding with theirs respecting the expediency of furnishing a complete history of all our affairs, so as to give the reader a full view and a right understanding of our doctrine, economy, labors, and success, as well as the difficulties with which we have to contend,—I am thus compelled to close this volume here, without even adding, as I intended, a chapter in relation to the Book Concern.

On reviewing my work I am very far from being

satisfied with what I have done. In addition to some incidental errors, which seem almost unavoidable in carrying a work through the press, though I have labored most assiduously to present every thing in consecutive order, yet the whole appears more like scraps and shreds than like a connected history. The reader may rest assured, however, that this was unavoidable, at least with the present writer, from the very manner in which he has attempted, year after year, to weave the materials together. And the labor necessary to produce a work of this character can be known only to those who may have made the trial, as I have frequently labored for hours, turning from one document to another, comparing and collating, in order to sift out the truth, to ascertain a fact that may have been recorded in a line or two.

This perplexing labor might, indeed, have been avoided, by writing what is called the *philosophy* of history, and by sliding over important facts, neglecting true historical details, and sluring over difficulties without attempting to remove them. The work, nevertheless, has, on the whole, been pleasant and profitable to myself, by increasing, as I humbly trust, my gratitude to God for having done so much for this branch of his Church.

I have aimed at *truth*—and in telling it have ventured to commend or censure, as I thought that sterling attribute required. In doing this, however, I have not lost sight of that consciousness of fallibility which so strikingly distinguishes human beings, and have uttered my thoughts with the same cautious freedom and impartiality with which I hope myself to be judged and spoken of by others.

With these remarks the present volume is dismissed, by only adding that whether I shall proceed further in the history is somewhat uncertain, and will depend on those contingencies over which human beings have but little control.

NOTE A.

The following extract of a letter I received from the Rev. William Case, in answer to one I wrote to him requesting information respecting the state of things on the lines, feeling, as I did, very anxious for the fate of those who were exposed to the calamities of war, many of whom, I was well aware, might be among my former acquaintances. The affecting description of the scene at Sackett's Harbor, contained in the following extract, struck me with such force at the time, that I requested permission of the author to make it public. In answer to this, under date of July 24, 1814, the writer says,

"I submit to your wisdom and prudence the propriety of publishing part of my last letter to you."

Of this permission, however, I have not availed myself until now, and it is published at this time with a view to illustrate the horrors of war, as well as to show that the anticipations mentioned in the text were fully realized, as also to exhibit the pious concern which was felt by God's faithful servants for those who were compelled to suffer in the calamities of a war which was then raging along the frontiers and in Canada.

Extract of a letter from the Rev. William Case, dated Utica, May 29, 1813.

"I was present a few hours after the battle at Sackett's Harbor, where I witnessed a scene of death and carnage more moving than all I ever saw before. Numbers lay cold in death! Many were groaning with their wounds and bleeding in their gore! . . . . . Myself and two more preachers were in Rutland, about ten miles from the harbor, and were about to commence clearing off a camp ground, but on hearing the cannon and constant roll of small arms we gave up the idea of work, and betook ourselves to prayer. Such sensations I never realized before! We knew many of our acquaintances were there, among whom were brethren in the Lord. We thought on the condition of women whose husbands and sons were exposed, the welfare of our country, where so much interest was at stake, and the honor of the nation concerned! But more than all this a thousand times, the immortal interest of thousands who were engaged in the contest. And here I know not that I felt any partiality for Americans more than

for Englishmen: all of one creation—alike the subjects of redeeming blood, all accountable to the King of kings, and deserving the same condemnation! With these reflections we immediately called the household and fell upon our knees in prayer, and the Lord poured on us the spirit of supplication. We wept aloud and prayed most fervently to the Ruler of nations and the Savior of men that he would pardon our national crimes, save men from death, protect the harbor from conquest, and have mercy on the precious souls of those who were constantly falling in battle. You may suppose that the constant sound of the instruments of death gave weight to our concern, and ardency to our petitions with all that our grace could inspire.

"We then mounted our horses and set out for the scene of action, that if possible we might afford some assistance as ministers, and administer consolation to the wounded and dying. When we reached the harbor the British had retreated to their shipping, leaving part of their dead and wounded on the field of battle. These, with our own men, were brought in from the field, the dead were stretched side by side in rows, and the wounded on beds and straw in as comfortable a condition as could be expected. We were conducted by a friend to the several hospitals, where I saw the distress of about eighty wounded. I cannot describe my feelings, to hear the groans of the wounded and dying, some pierced through the body, others through the head, some bruised by the falling of the timbers of trees, others with broken bones, and one whose face was shot away (save his under jaw) by a grape shot. He was yet breathing strong. This was a shocking view. . . . . Some were in such pain they could not be conversed with, others being fatigued and broken of their rest were asleep. But we conversed with many who manifested seriousness, whom we pointed to the suffering bleeding Savior, and exhorted them to look to him for mercy. Here I saw how useful a faithful and feeling chaplain might be. The best opportunity would present in alleviating the miseries of men in some degree, by procuring such things as the distressed most needed, and by comforting them in their afflictions. And here he might be heard, though at other times his counsel would be slighted.

"In conversation with the British wounded I found a serious young man who had been a hearer of the Methodists in Ireland.

Quebec, and Upper Canada; his name was Hornbrook, and he belonged to the 100th regiment. Also a brother, Charles Pratt, one of our own militia, badly wounded. Both were very glad to see and talk with their preachers.

"Having been without bread a long time many of the militia were very hungry. Some wanted coffee, some milk, some bread. We gave them the biscuits we carried down, but could procure no milk for them. I really desired to stay with them, my heart thirsted to do them good. One young man who was wounded told me his brother was killed in battle. His parents, I think, live east of Connecticut River. . . . We were then conducted to the remains of Col. Mills, of the Albany volunteers. He and the British General Gray were laid out together, both brave, "by mutual wounds expired," but now slept peaceably together. Among the wounded I heard no swearing. In this battle several of our brethren suffered. Brother Graves, an ensign in the militia, living near the harbor, and several others, were taken prisoners. He has since written from Montreal to his family. Brother Fay, of Ellisburgh, was wounded in the first part of the action, and in attempting to make his way through the woods toward home, fell in with a body of Indians who had landed farther up, who shot him several times, scalped and mangled him in a horrible manner. His body was found some time after and interred by his father near the place. It seems the Indians were somehow interrupted, and in their hasty flight left the scalp and knife, which were found near the body. Brother F.'s money was found near him on a root; his scalp is in the possession of the widow.

"On leaving the harbor we called on some brethren, who, with their neighbors, carried down several gallons of milk, and distributed among the wounded. We also represented their case to the congregation at the close of the camp meeting, when twenty-five dollars were contributed and put into proper hands, who purchased coffee, sugar, and other delicacies which they most needed, and from time to time distributed among them. For this they were very thankful, and both English and American blessed me with many good wishes when I again visited the hospital four weeks ago. I found Hornbrook had recovered so far as to be able to hobble about. Of about seventy-five of our wounded twenty-one died; of twenty-four British wounded seven had died. They carried most of their

wounded off the field to their boats in time of battle. Brother Pratt has also recovered. . . . . The body of Col. Mills was removed to Watertown, where his funeral was attended by a numerous assembly of soldiers and citizens, where a sermon was preached on Prov. xxii, 1, when several traits in the character of the amiable colonel were proposed for imitation. The assembly were moved and wept.

"Our preachers on the lines have frequent opportunities of preaching to the soldiers, who are very fond of hearing. We find it necessary to avoid all political discussions, both in public and private."

The following extract from the same writer will show the deep interest he and others of a like spirit felt for those who were suffering the consequences of this bloody contest.

"*Albany, Oct.* 26, 1813.

"This moment I have returned from a visit to the barracks, in Greenbush, in company with brother Merwin.

"Having been kindly indulged by Col. Larned, commandant to the prisoners, we most joyfully embraced the privilege of proclaiming to them the sweet liberty of the gospel. They were called together by their officers, and a more attentive congregation I never expect to address again. As soon as we began to sing there was weeping; and immediately on our kneeling to prayer they all knelt down, and here and there we heard the voice of Amen to our petition for their salvation. I could not solve this till after the service. To my great surprise and mingled grief and joy, several brethren and acquaintances from Canada came and made themselves known to us; they were militia in arms, and were taken near Fort George; among these were Messrs. George Lawrence, leader at Four Mile Creek, William Clinton, from the head of the lake, and Russel Hawley, brother of David Hawley of Bay of Quintie; their captivity was an affliction which made friends more consoling.

"By them I was informed, that in consequence of the troubles there had been no preaching in that part for some time: that Mr. Ryan and others were traveling and doing all they could for God and souls: that none of our brethren in that part had been killed.

"Brother Merwin has permission to preach to them every

week, and he has appointed to do so every Tuesday afternoon, if the weather will permit. They are a mixed multitude of English, French, &c., amounting to about five hundred and fifty-nine, but were very anxious for meetings. Brother Merwin is to send them Bibles from the society in this place, and other books. O, pray for them!"

Much individual suffering was experienced in various places, and many instances of Christian sympathy were exhibited by ministers as well as private Christians, highly creditable to themselves and recommendatory of that religion which breathes good-will to man.

On the return of peace, the first national ship which anchored in the port of New-York, under the command of Commodore Chauncey, by his permission, was visited by one of our preachers, who delivered a sermon to the officers and men, which was listened to with serious attention, and for some time thereafter regular preaching was kept up at the navy-yard in Brooklyn, and at the barracks on Governor's Island and the other military posts in the bay of New-York. These efforts have been crowned with success, many of the sailors and soldiers having given evidence of a thorough reformation of heart and life.

CONTENTS

TO

HISTORY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

BOOK IV.

From 1792 to 1812.

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